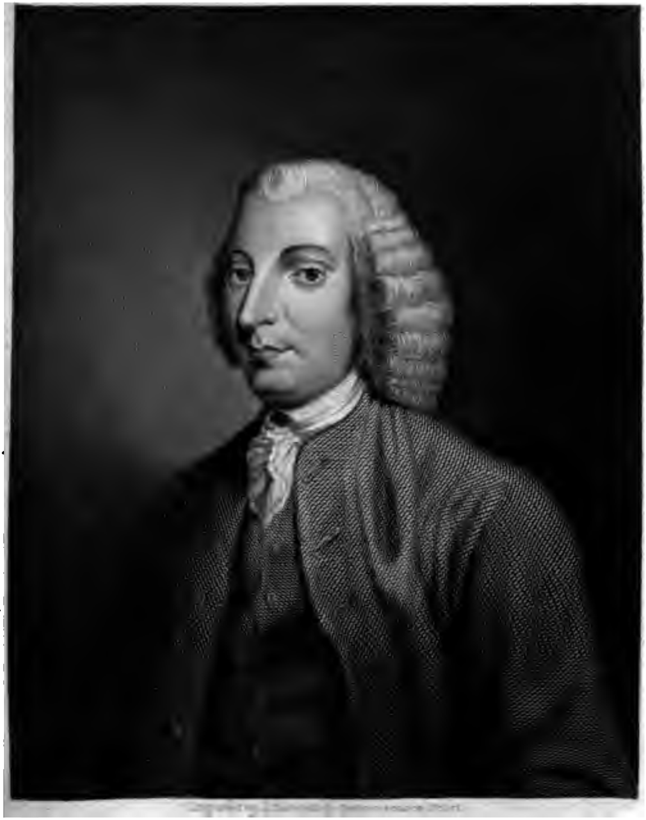
G. L. Barr





THE

PROSE WORKS

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

VOL. 3.



Dumbarton Castle and River Leven.

EDINBURGH, PUBLISHED 1834 BY ROBERT CADELL, & WHITTAKER & CO. LONDON.



THE

MISCELLANEOUS PROSE WORKS

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART., 1771-183

IN TWENTY-EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOLUME III.

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS.

VOL. I.

ROBERT CADELL, EDINBURGH:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The following Biographical and Critical Sketches—for they claim no more important name—were written for the purpose of serving as prefaces to a Collection called *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library;*[1] a work undertaken by the late Mr John Ballantyne, bookseller in Edinburgh, a person whom no one knew without being desirous to oblige him. It was carried on after his death by Messrs Hurst and Robinson of London, for the benefit, in some measure, of Mrs Ballantyne, but is for the present suspended. It has since been thought advisable to publish the Preliminary Notices in the present connected form. It may be necessary to observe, that the Lives do not lay claim to the merit of much research, being taken from the most accessible materials; and that the Critical Opinions are such as have

[1] [Published in 10 volumes, royal 8vo. London, 1821, &c.]

occurred without much or profound study to one, too much of whose time has been spent in that "delightful lande of faerie," the seducing mazes of fictitious narrative.[1]

Abbotsford, 1*st Sept.* 1825.

[1] [" A few years ago there appeared at Edinburgh ten volumes in succession of a collection entitled Ballantyne's Novelist's Library, to which Sir Walter Scott supplied prefatory memoirs of the various authors whose works the publication included. The book had the additional recommendations of handsome type and paper, and careful printing, yet it does not seem to have met with success, at least we are at a loss to account otherwise for its sudden suspension, in a state of obvious incompleteness. In the meantime, Mr Galignani has taken the liberty to detach Sir Walter's Memoirs from the bulky tomes in which they lay buried; and we hope our notice of his publication may induce those of whose property he has availed himself to imitate the shrewdness of his example. These essays are among the most agreeable specimens of biographical composition we are acquainted with: they contain a large assemblage of manly and sagacious remarks on human life and manners, and much ingenious criticism besides; and, thus presented in a compact form, must be considered as throwing a new and strong light upon a department of English literature, perhaps the most peculiar, certainly the most popular, and yet we cannot help thinking, among the least studied of all that we possess." —*Quarterly Review, September*, 1826, p. 349.]

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES, &c.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON.

The Life of this excellent man, and ingenious author, has been written, with equal spirit and candour, by Mrs Barbauld, a name long dear to elegant literature, and is prefixed to her publication of the Author's Correspondence, published by Philips, in six volumes, in 1804. The leading circumstances of these simple annals are necessarily extracted from that performance, to which the present Editor has no means of adding any thing of consequence.

Samuel Richardson was born in Derbyshire, in the year 1689. His father, a joiner by profession, was one of many sons, sprung from a family of middling note, which had been so far reduced, that the children were brought up to mechanical trades. His mother was also decently descended, but an orphan, left such in infancy by the death of both her parents, cut off within half an hour of each other by the great pestilence in 1663. Her name is not mentioned. Old Richardson was connected by employment with the unhappy Duke of

Monmouth, after whose execution he retired to Shrewsbury, apprehensive, perhaps, of a fate similar to that of College, his brother-in-trade, well known in those times by the title of the Protestant Joiner, who was executed for high treason in the reign of Charles II.

Having sustained severe losses in trade, the elder Richardson was unable to give his son Samuel more than a very ordinary education; and our author, who was to rise so high in one department of literature, was left unacquainted with any language excepting his own. Under all these disadvantages, and perhaps in some degree owing to their existence, young Richardson very early followed, with a singular bias, the course which was most likely to render his name immortal. We give his own words, for they cannot be amended:—

"I recollect, that I was early noted for having invention. I was not fond of play, as other boys: my school-fellows used to call me *Serious* and *Gravity;* and five of them particularly delighted to single me out, either for a walk, or at their fathers' houses, or at mine, to tell them stories, as they phrased it. Some I told them, from my reading, as true; others from my head, as mere invention; of which they would be most fond, and often were affected by them. One of them particularly, I remember, was for putting me to write a history, as he called it, on the model of Tommy Pots;[1] I now forget what it was, only that it was of a servant-man preferred by a fine young lady (for his good-

[1] Tommy Potts is the name of an old ballad published in Ritson's Ancient Songs.

ness) to a lord, who was a libertine. All my stories carried with them, I am bold to say, an useful moral."[1]

But young Richardson found a still more congenial body of listeners among the female sex. An old lady, indeed, seems to have resented an admonitory letter, in which the future teacher of morals contrasted her pretensions to religion with her habitual indulgence in slander and backbiting; but with the young and sentimental his reception was more gracious. "As a bashful and not forward

[1] Life of Richardson, vol. i., p. 36, 37. [It is impossible to consider without delight and admiration the contrast between Richardson's boyish fictions and those of his biographer himself, as described in the General Preface to the Waverley Novels. There Sir Walter Scott says, "I must refer to a very early period of my life, were I to point out my first achievements as a tale-teller, but I believe some of my old school-fellows can still bear witness that I had a distinguished character for that talent, at a time when the applause of my companions was my recompense for the disgraces and punishments which the future romance-writer incurred for being idle himself, and keeping others idle, during hours that should have been employed on our tasks. The chief enjoyment of my holidays was to escape with a chosen friend, who had the same taste with myself, and alternately to recite to each other such wild adventures as we were able to devise. We told, each in turn, interminable tales of knight-errantry, and battles, and enchantments, which were continued from one day to another as opportunity offered, without ever thinking of bringing them to a conclusion. As we observed a strict secrecy on the subject of this intercourse, it acquired all the character of a concealed pleasure, and we used to select, for the scenes of our indulgence, long walks through the solitary and romantic environs of Arthur's Seat, Salisbury Craigs, Braid Hills, and similar places in the vicinity of Edinburgh; and the recollection of those holidays still forms an *oasis* in the pilgrimage which I have to look back upon."]

boy," he says, " I was an early favourite with all the young women of taste and reading in the neighbourhood. Half-a-dozen of them, when met to work with their needles, used, when they got a book they liked, and thought I should, to borrow me to read to them; their mothers sometimes with them; and both mothers and daughters used to be pleased with the observations they put me upon making.—I was not more than thirteen, when three of these young women, unknown to each other, having an high opinion of my taciturnity, revealed to me their love secrets, in order to induce me to give them copies to write after, or correct, for answers to their lovers' letters; nor did any one of them ever know that I was the secretary to the others. I have been directed to chide, and even repulse, when an offence was either taken or given, at the very time when the heart of the chider or repulser was open before me, overflowing with esteem and affection; and the fair repulser, dreading to be taken at her word, directing *this* word, or *that* expression, to be softened or changed. One, highly gratified with her lover's fervour, and vows of everlasting love, has said, when I have asked her direction, *I cannot tell you what to write;* but (her heart on her lips) *you cannot write too kindly.* All her fear was only, that she should incur slight for her kindness."[1]

[1] Life of Richardson, vol. i., p. 39, 40. [Mrs Barbauld adds, " Human nature is human nature in every class; the hopes and the fears, the perplexities and struggles, of these low-bred girls, in probably an obscure village, supplied the future author with those ideas which, by their gradual developement, produced the characters of a Clarissa and a Clementina; nor was he probably happier, or amused in a more

His father had nourished some ambitious views of dedicating young Richardson to the ministry, but, as his circumstances denied him the means of giving him necessary education, Samuel was destined to that profession most nearly connected with literature, and was bound apprentice to Mr John Wilde, of Stationers' Hall, in the year 1706. Industrious as well as intelligent, regulated in his habits, and diverted by no headstrong passion from the strictest course of duty, Richardson made rapid progress in his employment as a printer.

" I served," he says, " a diligent seven years to it; to a master who grudged every hour to me that tended not to his profit, even of those times of leisure and diversion, which the refractoriness of my fellow-servants *obliged* him to allow them, and were usually allowed by other masters to their apprentices. I stole from the hours of rest and relaxation my reading times for improvement of my mind; and, being engaged in a correspondence with a gentleman, greatly my superior in degree, and of ample fortune, who, had he lived, intended high things for me, those were all the opportunities I had in my apprenticeship to carry it on. But this little incident I may mention; I took care that even my candle was of my own purchasing, that I might not, in the most trifling instance, make my master a sufferer, (and who used to call me the

lively manner, when sitting in his grotto, with a circle of the best-informed women in England about him, who, in after times, courted his society, than in reading to these girls in, it may be, a little back shop, or a mantuamaker's parlour, with a brick floor."—*Ib.*, p. 40, 41.]

pillar of his house,) and not to disable myself by watching or sitting up, to perform my duty to him in the day-time."[1]

The correspondence betwixt Richardson and the gentleman who had so well selected an object of patronage, was voluminous; but at the untimely death of his friend, it was, by his particular desire, consigned to the flames.

Several years more were spent in the obscure drudgery of the printing-house ere Richardson took out his freedom, and set up as a master printer. His talents for literature were soon discovered; and, in addition to his proper business, he used to oblige the booksellers, by furnishing them with prefaces, dedications, and such like garnishing of the works submitted to his press. He printed several of the popular periodical papers of the day, and at length, through the interest of Mr Onslow, the Speaker, obtained the lucrative employment of printing the Journals of the House of Commons, by which he must have reaped considerable advantages, although he occasionally had to complain of delay of payment on the part of government.

Punctual in his engagements, and careful in the superintendence of his business—fortune, and respect, its sure accompaniment, began to flow in upon Richardson. In 1754, he was chosen Master of the Stationers' Company; and, in 1760, he purchased a moiety of the patent of Printer to the King, which seems to have added considerably to his revenue. He was now a man in very easy circumstances; and, besides his premises in Salis-

[1] Life of Richardson, vol. i., p. 41, 42.

bury Court, he enjoyed the luxury of a villa, first at North-End, near Hammersmith, afterwards at Parsons-Green.

Richardson was twice married; first to Allington Wilde, his master's daughter, and after her death, in 1731, to the sister of James Leake, bookseller, who survived her distinguished husband. He has made a feeling commemoration of the family misfortunes which he sustained, in a letter to Lady Bradshaigh. "I told you, madam, that I have been married twice; both times happily: you will guess so, as to my first, when I tell you that I cherish the memory of my lost wife to this hour; and, as to the second, when I assure you that I can do so without derogating from the merits of, or being disallowed by, my present, who speaks of her, on all occasions, as respectfully and affectionately as I do myself.

"By my first wife I had five sons and one daughter; some of them living, to be delightful prattlers, with all the appearances of sound health, lively in their features, and promising as to their minds; and the death of one of them, I doubt, accelerating, from grief, that of the otherwise laudably afflicted mother. I have had, by my present wife, five girls and one boy; I have buried of these the promising boy, and one girl: four girls I have living, all at present very good; their mother, a true and instructing mother to them.

"Thus have I lost six sons (all my sons) and two daughters, every one of which, to answer your question, I parted with with the utmost regret. Other heavy deprivations of friends, very near,

and very dear, have I also suffered. I am very susceptible, I will venture to say, of impressions of this nature. A father, an honest, worthy father, I lost by the accident of a broken thigh, snapped by a sudden jirk, endeavouring to recover a slip passing through his own yard. My father, whom I attended in every stage of his last illness, I long mourned for. Two brothers, very dear to me, I lost abroad. A friend, more valuable than most brothers, was taken from me. No less than eleven affecting deaths in two years! My nerves were so affected with these repeated blows, that I have been forced, after trying the whole *materia medica*, and consulting many physicians, as the only palliative, (not a remedy to be expected,) to go into a regimen; and, for seven years past, have I forborne wine, and flesh, and fish; and, at this time, I and all my family are in mourning for a good-sister, with whom neither I would have parted, could I have had my choice. From these affecting dispensations, will you not allow me, madam, to remind an unthinking world, immersed in pleasures, what a life this is that they are so fond of, and to arm them against the affecting changes of it?"[1]

But this amiable and excellent man was not deprived of the most pleasing exercise of his affections, notwithstanding the breaches which had been made among his offspring. Four daughters survived to discharge those duties which the affectionate temper of their father rendered peculiarly precious to him. Mary was married during her

[1] Life of Richardson, vol. i., p. 48, 49, 50.

father's lifetime to Mr Ditcher, a respectable surgeon at Bath. Martha, who had been his principal amanuensis, became, after his decease, the wife of Edward Bridgen, Esq.; and Sarah married Mr Crowther, surgeon, in Boswell's Court. Anne, a woman of a most amiable disposition, but whose weak health had often alarmed the affections of her parents, survived, nevertheless, her sisters, as well as her parents. A nephew of Richardson's paid him, in his declining years, the duties of a son, and assisted him in the conducting of his business; which concludes all it is necessary to say concerning the descendants and connexions of this distinguished author.

The private life of Richardson has nothing to detain the biographer. We have mentioned the successive opportunities, which, cautiously yet ably improved, led him to eminence in his highly respectable profession, by that slow but secure progress, which has nothing in it to arrest attention, or to gratify curiosity. He was unceasingly industrious; led astray by no idle views of speculation, and seduced by no temptations to premature expenditure. Industry brought independence, and, finally, wealth in its train; and that well-won fortune was husbanded with prudence, and expended with liberality. A kind and generous master, he was eager to encourage his servants to persevere in the same course of patient labour by which he had himself attained fortune; and it is said to have been his common practice to hide half-a-crown among the types, that it might reward the diligence of the workman who should first be in the office in the

morning. His hospitality was of the most liberal, as well as the most judicious kind. One of his correspondents describes him as sitting at his door like an old patriarch, and inviting all who passed by to enter, and be refreshed;—and this, says Mrs Barbauld, "whether they brought with them the means of amusing their host, or only required his kind notice, and that of his family." He was generous and benevolent to distressed authors, a class of men with whom his profession brought him into contact; and had occasion, more than once, to succour Dr Johnson during his days of poverty,[1] and to assist his efforts to force himself into public notice. The domestic revolutions of his life, after mentioning the losses he had sustained in his family, may be almost summed up in two great events. He changed his villa, in which he indulged, like other wealthy citizens, from North-End to Parsons-Green; and his printing establishment, from the one side of Salisbury Court to the other; which last alteration, he complains, did not meet Mrs Richardson's approbation.

If we look yet closer into Richardson's private life, (and who loves not to know the slightest particulars concerning a man of his genius?) we find so much to praise, and so very little deserving censure, that we almost think we are reading the description of one of the amiable characters he has

[1] [Johnson seems to have been, on one occasion at least, bailed out of a spunging-house by Richardson, and to have been in the habit of applying to him for small loans of money, when his immediate employers were out of the way. See the first volume of *Boswell.*]

drawn in his own works. A love of the human species; a desire to create happiness and to witness it; a life undisturbed by passion, and spent in doing good; pleasures which centered in elegant conversation, in bountiful hospitality, in the exchange of all the kindly intercourse of life,—marked the worth and unsophisticated simplicity of the good man's character. He loved children, and knew the rare art of winning their attachment; for, partaking in that respect the sagacity of the canine race, they are not to be deceived by dissembled attention. A lady, who shared the hospitality of Richardson, and gives an excellent account of the internal regulations of his virtuous and orderly family, remembers creeping to his knee, and hanging on his words, as well as the good-nature with which he backed her petitions, to be permitted to remain a little longer when she was summoned to bed, and his becoming her guarantee, that she would not require the servant's assistance to put her to bed, and to extinguish the candle. Trifling as these recollections may seem, they are pleasing proofs that the author of *Clarissa* was, in private life, the mild good man which we wish to suppose him.

The predominant failing of Richardson seems certainly to have been vanity; vanity naturally excited by his great and unparalleled popularity at home and abroad, and by the continual and concentred admiration of the circle in which he lived. Such a weakness finds root in the mind of every one who has obtained general applause, but Richardson, the gentleness of whose mind was almost feminine, was peculiarly susceptible of this feminine

weakness, and he fostered and indulged its growth, which a man of firmer character would have crushed and restrained. The cup of Circe converted men into beasts; and that of praise, when deeply and eagerly drained, seldom fails to make wise men in some degree fools. There seems to have been a want of masculine firmness in Richardson's habits of thinking, which combined with his natural tenderness of heart in inducing him to prefer the society of women; and women, from the quickness of their feelings, as well as their natural desire to please, are always the admirers, or rather the idolaters, of genius, and generally its willing flatterers. Richardson was in the daily habit of seeing, conversing, and corresponding with many of the fair sex; and the unvaried, and, it would seem, the inexhaustible theme, was his own writings. Hence, Johnson, whose lofty pride never suffered him to cherish the meaner foible of vanity, has passed upon Richardson, after a just tribute to his worth, the severe sentence recorded by Boswell:—"I only remember," says the biographer, "that Johnson expressed a high value for his talents and virtues: But that his perpetual study was to ward off petty inconveniences, and to procure petty pleasures; that his love of continual superiority was such, that he took care always to be surrounded by women who listened to him implicitly, and did not ventur to contradict his opinions; and that his desire distinction was so great, that he used to give lar vails to Speaker Onslow's servants, that they mig treat him with respect."[1] An anecdote, which seem

[1] Life of Richardson, vol. i., p. 171, 172.—This char

to confirm Johnson's statement, is given by Boswell, on authority of a lady who was present when the circumstance took place. A gentleman, who had lately been at Paris, sought, while in a large company at Richardson's villa at North-End, to gratify the landlord, by informing him that he had seen his *Clarissa* lying on the king's brother's table.[1] Richardson observing that a part of the company were engaged in conversation apart, affected not to hear what had been said, but took advantage of the first general pause, to address the gentleman with—"Sir, I think you were saying something about"—and then stopped, in a flutter of expectation; which his guest mortified, by replying, "A mere trifle, sir, not worth repeating."[2]

ter was given at the house of a venerable Scottish Judge, now no more, who was so great an admirer of *Sir Charles Grandison*, that he was said to have read that work over once every year in the course of his life.

[1] ["Mr Northcote relates, that Johnson introduced Sir Joshua Reynolds and his sister to Richardson, but hinted to them, at the same time, that, if they wished to see the latter in good humour, they must expatiate on the excellences of 'Clarissa;' and Mrs Piozzi tells us, that, when talking of Richardson, he once said, 'You think I love flattery—and so I do; but a little too much always disgusts me: that fellow Richardson, on the contrary, could not be contented to sail quietly down the stream of reputation, without longing to taste the froth from every stroke of the oar.'"—CROKER's *Boswell*, vol. i., p. 210.]

[2] Johnson himself felt pride on finding his Dictionary in Lord Scarsdale's dressing-room, and pointed it out to his friend, with the classical quotation, *Quæ terra nostri non plena laboris?* Yet, under correction of both these great authors, the more substantial fame is to find a popular work, not in the closet of the great, who buy every book which bears a name, but in the cabins of the poor, who must have made some sacrifice to effect the purchase.

The truth seems to be, that Richardson, by nature shy, and of a nervous constitution, limited also by a very narrow education, cared not to encounter in conversation with those rougher spirits of the age, where criticism might have had too much severity in it. And he seems to have been reserved even in the presence of Johnson, though bound to him by obligation, and although that mighty aristarch professed to have the talent of "making him rear," and of calling forth his powers.[1] Nor does he appear to have associated much with any of the distinguished geniuses of the age, saving Dr Young, with whom he corresponded late in life. Aaron Hill, who patriotically endeavoured to make him a convert to wines of British manufacture; and Mr Edwards, author of the *Canons of Criticism*, though both clever men, do not deserve to be mentioned as exceptions.

The society of Richardson was limited to a little circle of amiable and accomplished persons, who were contented to allow a central position to the author of *Clarissa*, and to revolve around him in inferior orbits. The families of Highmore and Duncombe produced more than one individual of this description; and besides Mrs Donellan, and

[1] ["Richardson had little conversation except about his own works, of which Sir Joshua Reynolds said he was always willing to talk, and glad to have them introduced. Johnson, when he carried Mr Langton to see him, professed that he could bring him out into conversation, and used this allusive expression—'Sir, I can make him *rear*.' But he failed; for, in that interview, Richardson said little else than that there lay in the room a translation of his Clarissa into German." —CROKER's *Boswell*, vol. v., p. 360.]

the Miss Fieldings, whom Richardson loved, notwithstanding the offences of their brother, there was a Miss Mulso, Miss Westcombe, and other ladies besides, full of veneration for the kind instructor, whom they were permitted to term their adopted father. Mrs Charlotte Lennox was also a regular visitor at Parsons-Green, and scarce could remember a visit in which her host had not rehearsed at least one, but probably two or three, voluminous letters, if he found her in the humour of listening with attention.

While *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison* were in progress, Richardson used to read a part of his labours to some of this chosen circle every morning, and receive, it may readily be supposed, a liberal tribute of praise, with a very moderate portion of criticism. Miss Highmore, who inherited a paternal taste for painting, has recorded one of those scenes in a small drawing, where Richardson, in a morning-gown and cap, is introduced reading the manuscript of *Sir Charles Grandison* to such a little group.

This was all very amiable, though perhaps bordering on an effeminate love of flattery and applause; but it must be owned that our author disdained not flattery from less pure hands than those of his ordinary companions. We will not dwell upon poor Lætitia Pilkington, whose wants, rather than her extravagant praises, may be supposed to have conciliated the kindness of Richardson, notwithstanding the infamy of her character;[1] but we are rather

1 [" See Mrs Pilkington's Memoirs, vol. ii., p. 238; and Niccoll's Literary Anecdotes, vol. iv., p. 583. It may be

scandalized that the veteran iniquity of old Cibber should not have excluded him from the intimacy of the virtuous Richardson, and that the grey profligate could render himself acceptable to the author of *Sir Charles Grandison* by such effusions of vulgar vivacity as the following, which we cannot forbear inserting :—"I have just finished the sheets you favoured me with; but never found so strong a proof of your sly ill-nature, as to have hung me up upon tenters till I see you again. Z—ds! I have not patience, till I know what's become of her.—Why, you! I don't know what to call you! —Ah! ah! you may laugh if you please: but how will you be able to look me in the face, if the lady should ever be able to show *hers* again? What piteous, d—d, disgraceful pickle have you plunged her in? For God's sake send me the sequel; or —I don't know what to say!"[1]—Yet another delectable quotation from the letters of that merry old good-for-nothing, which, as addressed by a rake of the theatre to the most sentimental author of the age, and as referring to one of his favourite and most perfect characters, is, in its way, a matchless specimen of elegant vivacity.—"The delicious meal I made of Miss Byron on Sunday last, has given me an appetite for another slice of her, off from the spit, before she is served up to the public table;

worth noting, that Lætitia describes herself as calling on Richardson in an undress, 'never having formed any great idea of a printer by those she had seen in Ireland,' and being 'extremely surprised when she was directed to a house of very grand outward appearance.'"]

[1] Correspondence of Richardson, vol. ii., p. 172, 173

if about five o'clock to-morrow afternoon will not be inconvenient, Mrs Brown and I will come and piddle upon a bit more of her: but pray let your whole family, with Mrs Richardson at the head of them, come in for their share."[1]

An appetite for praise, and an over-indulgence of that appetite, not only teaches an author to be gratified with the applause of the unworthy, and to prefer it to the censure of the wise, but it leads to the less pardonable error of begrudging others their due share of public favour. Richardson was too good, too kind a man to let literary envy settle deep in his bosom, yet an overweening sense of his own importance seems to have prevented his doing entire justice to the claims of those who might be termed his rivals. He appears to have been rather too prone to believe ill of those authors, against whose works exceptions, in point of delicacy, might justly be taken. He has inserted in his Correspondence an account of Swift's earlier life, highly injurious to the character of that eminent writer, and which the industry of Dr Barrett has since shown to be a gross misrepresentation. The same tone of feeling has made him denounce, with the utmost severity, the indecorum of *Tristram Shandy*, without that tribute of applause which, in every view of the case, was so justly due to the genius of the author, and which would have come with particular propriety from Richardson, himself a master of the pathetic style of composition. Richardson seems also to have joined Aaron Hill in the cuckoo-song, that Pope had written himself out

[1] Correspondence of Richardson, vol. ii., p. 176.

—and, finally, the dislike which he manifests towards Fielding, though it originated in a gratuitous insult on the part of the latter, breaks out too often, and is too anxiously veiled under an affectation of charity and candour, not to lead us to suspect that the author of *Tom Jones* was at least as obnoxious to Richardson through the success, as from the alleged immorality, of his productions. It would have been generous in the wealthier and happier of these competitors for public fame, to have reflected, that, while his own bark lay safe in harbour, or was wafted on by the favouring gale of applause, his less fortunate rival had to struggle with the current and the storm. But as this disagreeable subject will be found canvassed in Fielding's Life, we will not farther dwell on it here. Of all pictures of literary life, that which exhibits two men, of transcendent, though different talents, engaged in the depreciation of each other, is most humbling to human nature, most unpleasing to a candid and enlightened reader. Excepting against Fielding, Richardson seems to have nourished no positive literary feud. But it is to be regretted, that, in his Correspondence, we find few traces that he either loved or admired contemporary genius.[1]

[1] [Lord Byron, on finding some sheets of Pamela applied to "base uses," at Ravenna, in 1821, thus writes:—" What would Richardson, the vainest and luckiest of *living* authors, (*i. e.* while alive)—he who, with Aaron Hill, used to prophesy and chuckle over the presumed fall of Fielding (the *prose* Homer of human nature) and of Pope (the most beautiful of poets)—what would he have said, could he have traced his pages from their place on the French princes' toilets (see Boswell) to the grocer's counter and the gipsy-murderess's

It may appear invidious to dwell thus long on a sufficiently venial speck in a character so fair and amiable. But it is no useless lesson to show, that a love of praise, and a feeling of literary emulation, not to say vanity, foibles pardonable in themselves, and rarely separated from the poetical temperament, lead to consequences detrimental to the deserved reputation of the most ingenious author, and the most worthy man, as a dead fly will pollute the most precious unguent. Every author, but especially those who cultivate the lighter kinds of literature, should teach themselves the stern lesson, that their art must fall under the frequent censure, *Non est tanti;* and, for this reason, they should avoid, as they would the circle of Alcina, that sort of society, who so willingly form around every popular writer an atmosphere of assentation and flattery, and represent his labours as a matter of great consequence to the world, and his popularity as a matter to be defended on all occasions, and against all rivals.

Dismissing these considerations, we cannot omit to state, that Richardson's correspondence with one of his most intelligent and enthusiastic admirers, commenced, and was for some time carried on, in a manner which might have formed a pleasing incident in one of the author's own romances.

bacon!!! What would he have said? What can any body say, save what *Solomon said long before us?* After all, it is but passing from one counter to another—from the bookseller's to the other tradesman's—grocer or pastry-cook. For my part, I have met with most poetry upon trunks; so that I am apt to consider the trunk-maker as the sexton of authorship."—*Life and Works*, vol. v., p. 55.]

This was Lady Bradshaigh, the wife of Sir Roger Bradshaigh, of Haigh, in Lancashire, whose very considerable talent, and ardent taste for literature, had to contend with the prejudices which in those days seem to have rendered it ridiculous for a lady of rank and fashion, the wife of a country gentleman of estate and consideration, to enter into correspondence with a professed author. To gratify the strong propensity she felt to engage in literary intercourse with an author of Richardson's distinction, Lady Bradshaigh had recourse to the romantic expedient of commencing the correspondence with him under an assumed name. Thus, with all the precautions against discovery which are sometimes resorted to for less honest purposes, Richardson and his incognita maintained a close exchange of letters, until they seem on both sides to have grown desirous of becoming personally known to each other; and the author was induced to walk in the Park at a particular hour, and to send an accurate description of his person, that his fair correspondent might be able, herself unknown, to distinguish him from the vulgar herd of passengers. The following portrait exhibits all the graphical accuracy with which the author was accustomed to detail the appearance of his imaginary personages, and is at the same time very valuable, as it describes the external appearance of a man of genius, in whom great powers of observing life and manners were combined with bashful and retired habits.

"I go through the Park," says Richardson, "once or twice a-week to my little retirement; but I will, for a week together, be in it every day three

or four hours, at your command, till you tell me you have seen a person who answers to this description; namely, Short; rather plump than emaciated, notwithstanding his complaints; about five foot five inches; fair wig; lightish cloth coat, all black besides; one hand generally in his bosom, the other a cane in it, which he leans upon under the skirts of his coat usually, that it may imperceptibly serve him as a support, when attacked by sudden tremors or startings, and dizziness, which too frequently attack him, but, thank God, not so often as formerly; looking directly fore-right, as passers-by would imagine, but observing all that stirs on either hand of him without moving his short neck; hardly ever turning back; of a light brown complexion; teeth not yet failing him; smoothish-faced, and ruddy-cheeked: at sometimes looking to be about sixty-five, at other times much younger; a regular even pace, stealing away ground, rather than seeming to rid it: a grey eye, too often over-clouded by mistiness from the head; by chance lively; very lively it will be, if he have hope of seeing a lady whom he loves and honours; his eye always on the ladies; if they have very large hoops, he looks down and supercilious, and as if he would be thought wise, but perhaps the sillier for that: as he approaches a lady, his eye is never fixed first upon her face, but upon her feet, and thence he raises it up, pretty quickly for a dull eye; and one would think (if we thought him at all worthy of observation) that from her air and (the last beheld) her face, he sets her down in his mind as *so* or *so*, and then passes on to the next object he meets;

only then looking back, if he greatly likes or dislikes, as if he would see if the lady appear to be all of a piece, in the one light or in the other. Are these marks distinct enough, if you are resolved to keep all the advantages you set out with? And from this odd, this grotesque figure, think you, madam, that you have any thing to apprehend? Any thing that will not rather promote than check your mirth? I dare be bold to say (and allow it too) that you would rather see this figure than any other you ever saw, whenever you should find yourself graver than you wish to be."[1]

Lady Bradshaigh, like other ladies upon similar occasions, could not resist the opportunity of exercising a little capricious tyranny. Richardson's walks in the Park were for some time unnoticed. Both parties seem to have indulged in a gentle coquetry, until both were likely to lose temper, and the complaints on the gentleman's side became a little keen and eager. At length, Lady Bradshaigh dropped the mask, and continued afterwards to be in her own person the valued correspondent of the author. It is but justice to say, that the sense and spirit with which she supports her own views, even when contrary to those of Richardson, render her letters the most agreeable in the collection, and constitute a great difference betwixt her and some others of the author's female correspondents, who are satisfied with becoming the echoes of his sentiments and opinions. Lady Bradshaigh had a sister, Lady Echlin, who also corresponded with Richardson; but although she

[1] Correspondence of Richardson, vol. iv., p. 290, 291, 292

appears to have been an excellent woman, her letters want both the vivacity and talent displayed in those of Lady Bradshaigh. Yet Lady Echlin, too, had her moments of ambitious criticism. She even tried her hand at reforming Lovelace, as Mrs Barbauld informs us, by the aid of a Dr Christian; a consummation, as the reader will anticipate, much better meant than successfully executed.

Neither the admiration of the public, the applause of admirers, nor the deserved affection of his friends and family, could screen this amiable author from his share in the lot of humanity. Besides his family misfortunes, Richardson was afflicted with indifferent health, in the painful shape of nervous disorders. Sedentary habits, and close attention to business, had rendered a constitution delicate, which nature had never made strong; and it will readily be believed, that the workings of an imagination, constantly labouring in the fields of fiction, increased, rather than relieved, complaints, which affected his nerves at an early period. If, as he somewhere says, he made the distress of his characters his own, and wept for Clarissa, and Clementina, as if they had not been the creatures of his own fancy, the exhaustion of his spirits must have exasperated his malady. His nerves were latterly so much shaken, that he could not convey a glass of wine to his mouth, unless it was put into a large tumbler; and becoming unable to undergo the fatigue of conversing with the principal superintendent of his business, who chanced unluckily to be hard of hearing, all communication between them was maintained by means of writing. He did not long sur-

vive the space assigned by the Psalmist as the ordinary duration of human life. On the 4th July, 1761, Samuel Richardson died, aged seventy-two, and was buried, according to his own directions, beside his first wife, in the middle aisle of St Bride's Church, followed by the affectionate grief of those who were admitted to his society, and the sorrow of all who mourned over talents uniformly and conscientiously dedicated to the service of virtue. The following epitaph was written by his learned friend, Mrs Carter, but is not, we believe, inscribed on his tomb.

"If ever warm benevolence was dear,
If ever wisdom gain'd esteem sincere,
Or genuine fancy deep attention won,
Approach with awe the dust—of Richardson.
What though his muse, through distant regions known,
Might scorn the tribute of this humble stone;
Yet pleasing to his gentle shade, must prove
The meanest pledge of Friendship, and of Love;
For oft will these, from venal throngs exiled,
And oft will innocence, of aspect mild,
And white-robed Charity, with streaming eyes,
Frequent the cloister where their patron lies.
This, reader, learn; and learn from one whose woe
Bids her wild verse in artless accents flow:
For, could she frame her numbers to commend
The husband, father, citizen, and friend;
How would her muse display, in equal strain,
The critic's judgment, and the writer's vein!—
Ah, no! expect not from the chisel'd stone
The praises, graven on our hearts alone.
There shall his fame a lasting shrine acquire;
And ever shall his moving page inspire
Pure truth, fixt honour, virtue's pleasing lore,
While taste and science crown this favour'd shore."[1]

[1] Life of Richardson, vol. i., p. 212.

Richardson's character as a man, after all deductions have been made for circumstances and for human frailty, cannot be too highly estimated. It remains only to consider him as an author, and, for this purpose, to review his literary career, and the productions which it gave rise to.

It was by mere accident that Richardson appears to have struck out the line of composition so peculiarly adapted to his genius. He had at all times the pen of a ready correspondent; and, from his early age, had, as we have seen, been accustomed to lend it to others, and to write, of course, under different characters from his own. There can be no doubt, that, in the service of the young women who employed him as their amanuensis and confidant, this natural talent must have been considerably improved; and as little that the exercise of such a power was pleasing to the possessor. Chance at length occasioned its being employed in the service of the public. The account will be best given in the words of his own letter to Aaron Hill, who, in common with the public at large, had become pressingly anxious to know if there was any foundation in fact for the history of Pamela.

"I will now write to your question—Whether there was any original groundwork of fact, for the general foundation of Pamela's story.

"About twenty-five years ago, a gentleman, with whom I was intimately acquainted, but who, alas! is now no more! [probably the "corre-

spondent of fortune and rank," mentioned p. 7,] met with such a story as that of Pamela, in one of the summer tours which he used to take for his pleasure, attended with one servant only. At every inn he put up at, it was his way to enquire : curiosities in its neighbourhood, either ancient modern; and particularly he asked who was the owner of a fine house, as it seemed to him, beautifully situated, which he had passed by, (describi it,) within a mile or two of the inn.

"It was a fine house, the landlord said. The owner was Mr B——, a gentleman of a large estate in more counties than one. That his and his lady's history engaged the attention of everybody who came that way, and put a stop to all other enquiries, though the house and gardens were well worth seeing. The lady, he said, was one of the gr beauties in England; but the qualities of her mind had no equal; beneficent, prudent, and equally beloved and admired by high and low. That she had been taken at twelve years of age, for the sweetness of her manners and modesty, and for an understanding above her years, by Mr B——'s mother, a truly worthy lady, to wait on her person Her parents, ruined by suretiships, were remarkably honest and pious, and had instilled into their daughter's mind the best principles. When their misfortunes happened first, they attempted a little school, in their village, where they were much beloved; he teaching writing, and the first rules of arithmetic, to boys; his wife plain needle-work to girls, and to knit and spin; but that it answered

not: and, when the lady took their child, the industrious man earned his bread by day labour, and the lowest kind of husbandry.

"That the girl, improving daily in beauty, modesty, and genteel and good behaviour, by the time she was fifteen, engaged the attention of her lady's son, a young gentleman of free principles, who, on her lady's death, attempted, by all manner of temptations and devices, to seduce her. That she had recourse to as many innocent stratagems to escape the snares laid for her virtue; once, however, in despair, having been near drowning; that at last, her noble resistance, watchfulness, and excellent qualities, subdued him, and he thought fit to make her his wife. That she behaved herself with so much dignity, sweetness, and humility, that she made herself beloved of everybody, and even by his relations, who at first despised her; and now had the blessings both of rich and poor, and the love of her husband.

"The gentleman who told me this, added, that he had the curiosity to stay in the neighbourhood from Friday to Sunday, that he might see this happy couple at church, from which they never absented themselves: that, in short, he did see them; that her deportment was all sweetness, ease, and dignity mingled; that he never saw a lovelier woman: that her husband was as fine a man, and seemed even proud of his choice; and that she attracted the respects of the persons of rank present, and had the blessings of the poor.—The relater of the story told me all this with transport.

"This, sir, was the foundation of Pamela's

story; but little did I think to make a story of it for the press. That was owing to this occasion.

"Mr Rivington and Mr Osborne, whose names are on the titlepage, had long been urging me to give them a little book (which, they said, they were often asked after) of familiar letters on the useful concerns in common life; and, at last, I yielded to their importunity, and began to recollect such subjects as I thought would be useful in such a design, and formed several letters accordingly. And, among the rest, I thought of giving one or two as cautions to young folk circumstanced as Pamela was. Little did I think, at first, of making one, much less two volumes of it. But, when I began to recollect what had, so many years before, been told me by my friend, I thought the story, if written in an easy and natural manner, suitable to the simplicity of it, might possibly introduce a new species of writing, that might possibly turn young people into a course of reading different from the pomp and parade of romance-writing, and, dismissing the improbable and marvellous, with which novels generally abound, might tend to promote the cause of religion and virtue. I therefore gave way to enlargement; and so Pamela became as you see her. But so little did I hope for the approbation of judges, that I had not the courage to send the two volumes to your ladies, until I found the books well received by the public.

"While I was writing the two volumes, my worthy-hearted wife, and the young lady who is with us, when I had read them some part of the story, which I had begun without their knowing

it, used to come in to my little closet every night, with—'Have you any more of Pamela, Mr. R.? We are come to hear a little more of Pamela,' &c. This encouraged me to prosecute it, which I did so diligently, through all my other business, that, by a memorandum on my copy, I began it Nov. 10, 1739, and finished it Jan. 10, 1739-40. And I have often, censurable as I might be thought for my vanity for it, and lessening to the taste of my two female friends, had the story of Moliere's *Old Woman* in my thoughts upon the occasion.

"If justly low were my thoughts of this little history, you will wonder how it came by such an assuming and very impudent preface. It was thus:—The approbation of these two female friends, and of two more, who were so kind as to give me prefaces for it, but which were much too long and circumstantial, as I thought, made me resolve myself on writing a preface; I therefore, spirited by the good opinion of these four, and knowing that the judgments of nine parts in ten of readers were but in hanging-sleeves, struck a bold stroke in the preface you see, having the umbrage of the editor's character[1] to screen myself behind.—And thus, sir, all is out."

[1] Under the character of the Editor, he gave great commendations to the letters, for which he was blamed by some of his friends. ["The extreme delight which Richardson felt on a review of his own works, the works themselves witness. Each is an evidence of what some will deem a violent literary vanity. To Pamela is prefixed a *letter* from the *editor*, (whom we know to be the *author*,) consisting of one of the most minutely laboured panegyrics of the work itself, that even the blindest idolater of some ancient classic paid to the

Pamela, of which the reader has thus learned the origin, appeared in 1740, and made a most powerful sensation in the public. Hitherto, romances had been written, generally speaking, in the old French taste, containing the protracted amours of princes and princesses, told in language coldly extravagant, and metaphysically absurd. In these wearisome performances, there appeared not the most distant allusion to the ordinary tone of feeling, the slightest attempt to paint mankind as it exists in the ordinary walks of life—all was rant and bombast, stilt and buskin. It will be Richardson's eternal praise, did he merit no more, that he tore from his personages those painted vizards, which concealed, under a clumsy and affected disguise, every thing like the natural lineaments of the human countenance, and placed them before us bare-faced, in all the actual

object of his phrenetic imagination. In several places there, he contrives to repeat the striking parts of the narrative, which display the fertility of his imagination to great advantage. To the author's own edition of his *Clarissa* is appended an *alphabetical arrangement* of the *sentiments* dispersed throughout the work; and such was the fondness that dictated this voluminous arrangement, that such trivial aphorisms as 'habits are not easily changed;' 'men are known by their companions,' &c., seem alike to be the object of their author's admiration. This collection of sentiments, said indeed to have been sent him anonymously, is curious and useful, and shows the value of the work, by the extensive grasp of that mind, which could think so justly on such numerous topics. And in his third and final labours, to each volume of *Sir Charles Grandison* is not only prefixed a complete *index*, with as much exactness, as if it were a history of England, but there is also appended a list of the *similes* and allusions in the volume, some of which do not exceed *three* or *four*, in nearly as many hundred pages."—D'ISRAELI.]

changes of feature and complexion, and all the light and shade of human passion. It requires a reader to be in some degree acquainted with the huge folios of inanity, over which our ancestors yawned themselves to sleep, ere he can estimate the delight they must have experienced from this unexpected return to truth and nature.

The simplicity of Richardson's tale aided the effect of surprise. An innocent young woman, whose virtue a dissolute master assails by violence, as well as all the milder means of seduction, conquers him at last, by persevering in the paths of rectitude; and is rewarded, by being raised to the station of his wife, the lawful participator in his rank and fortune. Such is the simple story by which the world was so much surprised and affected.

The judicious criticism of Mrs Barbauld has pointed out, that the character of Pamela is far from attaining a heroic cast of excellence. On the contrary, there is a strain of cold-blooded prudence which runs through all the latter part of the novel, to which we are obliged almost to deny the name of virtue. She appears originally to have had no love for Mr B——; no passion to combat in her own bosom; no treachery to subdue in the garrison while the enemy was before the walls. Richardson voluntarily evaded giving this colouring to his tale, because it was intended more for edification than for effect; and because the example of a *soubrette* falling desperately in love with a handsome young master, might have been imitated by many in that rank of life, who could not have

defended themselves exactly like Pamela against the object of so dangerous a passion. Besides, Richardson was upon principle unwilling to exhibit his favoured characters as greatly subject to violent passion of any kind, and was much disposed to dethrone Cupid, whom romance-writers had installed as the literal sovereign of gods and men. Still, the character of Pamela is somewhat sunk by the eager gratitude with which she accepts the hand of a tyrannical and cruel master, when he could not at a cheaper rate make himself master of her person. There is a parade of generosity on his side, and a humiliating degree of creeping submission on hers, which the case by no means calls for, and unless, like her namesake in Pope's Satire, Pamela could console herself with the "gilt chariot and the Flanders mares," we should have thought her more likely to be happy as the humble wife of poor Mr Williams, of whose honest affection she makes somewhat too politic a use in the course of her trials, and whom she discards too coolly when better prospects seem to open upon her.

It is, perhaps, invidious to enter too closely upon the general tendency of a work of entertainment. But when the admirers of *Pamela* challenged for that work the merit of doing more good than twenty sermons,[1] we must demur to the motion.

[1] [" This publication, we are told, which made its first appearance in 1740, was received with a burst of applause. Dr Sherlock recommended it from the pulpit. Mr Pope said it would do more good than twenty volumes of sermons; and another literary oracle declared, that if all other books were to be burnt, Pamela and the Bible should be preserved. Its success was not less brilliant in the world of fashion. ' Even at

Its good effects must of course have operation among young women in circumstances somewhat similar to those of the heroine; and, in that rank, it may be questioned, whether the example is not as well calculated to encourage a spirit of rash enterprise, as of virtuous resistance. If Pamela became Esquire B——'s lady, it was only on account of her virtuous resistance to his criminal attacks; but it may occur to a humble maiden, (and the case we believe is not hypothetical,) that to merit Pamela's reward, she must go through Pamela's trials; and there can be no great harm in affording some encouragement to the assailant. We need not add how dangerous this experiment must be for both parties.

But we have elsewhere intimated an opinion, that the direct and obvious moral to be deduced from a fictitious narrative, is of much less consequence to the public, than the mode in which the story is treated in the course of its details. If the author introduces scenes which excite evil passions, if he familiarizes the mind of the readers with impure ideas, or sophisticates their understanding with false views of morality, it will be an unavailing defence, that, in the end of his book, he has represented virtue as triumphant. In the same manner, although some objections may be made to

Ranelah,' Mrs Barbauld assures us, 'it was usual for the ladies to hold up the volumes to one another, to show they had got the book that every one was talking of.' And, what will appear still more extraordinary, one gentleman declares, that he will give it to his son as soon as he can read, that he may have an early impression of virtue."—*Edinburgh Review*, October, 1804.]

the deductions which the author desired and expected should be drawn from the story of *Pamela*, yet the pure and modest character of the English maiden is so well maintained during the work; her sorrows and afflictions are borne with so much meekness; her little intervals of hope or comparative tranquillity break in on her troubles so much like the specks of blue sky through a cloudy atmosphere, that the whole recollection is soothing, tranquillizing, and doubtless edifying. We think little of Mr B——, his character, or his motives, and are only delighted with the preferment of our favourite, because it seems to give so much satisfaction to herself. The pathetic passage, in which she describes her ineffectual attempt to escape, may be selected, among many, as an example of the beautiful propriety and truth with which the author was able to throw himself into the character of his heroine, and to think and reason, and express those thoughts and reasons, exactly as she must have done had the fictitious incident really befallen such a person.

The inferior persons are sketched with great truth, and may be considered as a group of English portraits of the period. In particular, the characters of the father and mother, old Andrews and his wife, are, like that of Pamela herself, in the very best style of drawing and colouring; and the interview of the former with his landlord, when he enquires after the fate of his daughter, would have immortalized Richardson, had he never wrote another line.

It may be here observed, that, had the author

lived in the present day, he would probably have thrown into the character of the deeply-injured peasant a spirit of manly indignation, which the occasion demanded. But in Richardson's time, the bonds of subordination in society were drawn very strictly, and he himself appears to have had high and exaggerated ideas of the importance of wealth and rank, as well as of domestic authority of every kind. Mr B—— does not seem to have incurred any severe censure among his neighbours for the villanies which he practises upon Pamela; she herself supposes them more than atoned for by his condescension in wedding her, and consents to receive into favour even the unwomanly and infamous Mrs Jewkes, because the old procuress had acted a part she should have been hanged for, at the command, forsooth, of a generous master. There is want of taste in this humiliation; and a touch of spirit upon the occasion would not have misbecome even the all-forgiving Pamela.

Notwithstanding such defects, which, in fact, only occur to us upon a critical perusal, the pleasing simplicity of a tale so true to nature commanded the general and enthusiastic applause of the public. It was in vain that the mischievous wit of Fielding found a source for ridicule in that very simplicity of moral and of incident, and gave the world *Joseph Andrews*, an avowed parody upon the *Pamela* of Richardson. It chanced with that very humorous performance as with the *Shepherd's Week* of Gay, that readers lost sight altogether of the satirical purpose with which it was written, and were delighted with it on account of its own intrinsic merit.

We may be permitted to regret, therefore, the tone of mind with which Fielding composed a work, in professed ridicule of such genius as that of Richardson; but how can we wish that undone, without which Parson Adams would not have existed?

The success of *Pamela* induced some wretched imitator to carry on the story in a continuation, entitled *Pamela in High Life*. This intrusion provoked Richardson to a similar attempt, in which he represents Pamela's husband as reclaimed from the prosecution of a guilty intrigue by the patient sorrows of his virtuous wife. The work met with the usual fate of continuations, and has been always justly accounted an unnatural and unnecessary appendage to a tale so complete within itself as the first part of *Pamela*.

Eight years after the appearance of *Pamela*, Richardson published *Clarissa*, the work on which his fame as a classic of England will rest for ever. The tale, like that of its predecessor, is very simple; but the scene is laid in a higher rank of life, the characters are drawn with a bolder pencil, and the whole accompaniments are of a far loftier mood.

Clarissa, a character as nearly approaching to perfection as the pencil of the author could draw, is persecuted by a tyrannical father and brother, an envious sister, and the other members of a family, who devoted every thing to its aggrandizement, in order to compel her to marry a very disagreeable suitor. These intrigues and distresses she communicates, in a series of letters, to her friend Miss

Howe, a young lady of an ardent, impetuous disposition, and an enthusiast in friendship. After a series of sufferings, rising almost beyond endurance, Clarissa is tempted to throw herself upon the protection of her admirer Lovelace, a character, in painting whom Richardson has exerted his utmost skill, until he has attained the very difficult and critical point, of rendering every reader pleased with his wit and abilities, even while detesting the villany of his conduct. Lovelace is represented as having devoted his life and his talents to the subversion of female virtue; and not even the charms of Clarissa, or the generosity due to her unprotected situation, can reconcile him to the idea of marriage. This species of perverted Quixotry is not much understood in the present age, when a modern voluptuary seeks the gratification of his passions where it is most easily obtained, and is seldom at the trouble of assault, when there is any probability of the fortress being resolutely defended. But in former days, when men, like Lord Baltimore, were found, at the risk of life itself, capable of employing the most violent means for the ruin of innocence, a character approaching that of Lovelace was not perhaps so unnatural. That he should have been so successful in previous amours, is not very probable; and as Mrs Barbauld justly observes, he was more likely to have been run through the body long before ever he saw Colonel Morden. But some exaggeration must be allowed to the author of a romance; and considering the part which Lovelace had to perform, it was necessary that his character should be highly coloured. This

perfidious lover, actuated, it would seem, as much by the love of intrigue and of enterprise, as by his desire to humble the Harlowe family, and lower the pride of this their beloved daughter, whose attachment to him was not of the devoted character which he conceived was due to his merits, forms a villanous scheme for the destruction of her virtue. Without the least regard for the character of a woman, whom he always seems to have intended for his wife at some future period, he contrives to lodge her with the keeper of a common brothel, and to place around her the inmates of such a place. At length, every effort to accomplish his guilty purpose having failed, he administers opiates, and violates the person of his victim while under their influence. But he obtains nothing by his crime, save infamy and remorse. The lady dies of a broken heart, and he himself falls by the sword of one of her kinsmen.

It cannot be denied, that this story is attended with many improbabilities. Allowing for Lovelace's very peculiar character, admitting that his selfishness, his pride, and his love of intrigue, had hardened his heart to all consequences, surrounded it, as he himself says, "with flint and callus," and induced him to prefer a crooked and most foul path to one which was fair and honourable, there is no excuse for his correspondent Belford, as a man and a gentleman, keeping his friend's infamous secret. Nay, we are apt to blame Clarissa herself, who, in her escape to Hampstead, did not place herself under the guardianship of a magistrate. We will venture to say, that Justice Fielding

would have afforded her his most effectual protection; and that if Tomlinson, the false Miss Montague, or any other of Lovelace's agents, had ventured to appear in the office, they would have been committed by his worship as old acquaintances. In our own day too, though that was not a feature of the writer's age, the whole story of the elopement would have flown on the wings of the newspapers, not to Hampstead and Highgate only, but to Truro and Newcastle-upon-Tyne; and not a Mrs Moore or a Mrs Rawlins in England but would have been too particularly acquainted with "the mysterious affair of Harlowe-Place," to be deceived by the representations of Lovelace. But it is unfair to tax an author too severely upon improbabilities, without conceding which his story could have no existence; and we have the less title to do so, because, in the history of real life, that which is actually true bears often very little resemblance to that which is probable. If every assault were skilfully parried, and every man played with ability, life would become like a trial of skill with foils, or like a game at chess, and strength and address would no longer be defeated by time and chance, which, in the words of Solomon, happen unto all men.

The conduct of the injured Clarissa through the subsequent scenes, which are perhaps among the most affecting and sublime in the English school of romance, raises her, in her calamitous condition, so far above all around her, that her character beams on the reader with something like superhuman splendour. Our eyes weep, our hearts ache;

yet our feelings triumph with the triumph of virtue, as it rises over all the odds which the deepest misfortune, and even degradation, have thrown into the scale. There is a noble pride amid the sorrow with which we contemplate the distresses of such a being as Clarissa, becoming more exalted over that personal dishonour, which, when it has once taken place, under what circumstances soever, is generally understood to infer degradation. It was reserved to Richardson to show there is a chastity of the soul, which can beam out spotless and unsullied even after that of the person has been violated; and the dignity of Clarissa, under her disgrace and her misfortunes, reminds us of the saying of the ancient poet, that a good man, struggling with the tide of adversity, and surmounting it, was a sight which the immortal gods might look down upon with pleasure. This is a subject which Mrs Barbauld has dwelt upon with a suitable feeling of the dignity of her sex. The more contracted and limited view of Clarissa's merit, merely as resisting the efforts of a practised seducer, although it was unquestionably in Richardson's view, his biographer reasonably spurns as degrading to womanhood. Clarissa, bred in a superior rank in life, led astray by no strong passion, courted by a lover, who had immediate marriage in his power, must have been a subordinate person indeed, if incapable of repelling his attempts at dishonouring her person. I cannot avoid transcribing the excellent reflections which follow this reasoning:—"The real moral of Clarissa is, that virtue is triumphant in every situation; that in circumstances the most

painful and degrading, in a prison, in a brothel, in grief, in distraction, in despair, it is still lovely, still commanding, still the object of our veneration, of our fondest affections; that, if it is seated on the ground, it can still say with Constance,

'Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it.'

"The Novelist that has produced this effect, has performed his office well, and it is immaterial what particular maxim is selected under the name of a moral while such are the reader's feelings. If our feelings are in favour of virtue, the novel is virtuous; if of vice, the novel is vicious. The greatness of Clarissa is shown by her separating herself from her lover, as soon as she perceives his dishonourable views; in her choosing death rather than a repetition of the outrage; in her rejection of those overtures of marriage, which a common mind might have accepted of, as a refuge against worldly dishonour; in her firm indignant carriage, mixed with calm patience and Christian resignation, and in the greatness of mind with which she views and enjoys the approaches of death, and her meek forgiveness of her unfeeling relations."[1]

These arguments, however, were not at first readily admitted by Richardson's warmest admirers. The first four volumes of *Clarissa* having appeared, and a report having been spread that the catastrophe was to be unfortunate, many remonstrances were made on the subject by those readers who shrunk from the extreme pain inflicted by the tragical part

[1] Life of Richardson, vol. i., p. 150.

of the narrative, and, laying aside the contemplation of the moral, complained, that in a professed work of amusement, the author had contrived to harrow up their feelings to a degree that was intolerably painful. Old Cibber raved on the subject like a profane Bedlamite; and what was perhaps of more consequence to Richardson, the rumour of Lovelace's success, and Clarissa's death, occasioned Lady Bradshaigh's opening her romantic correspondence with him, under the assumed name of Belfour. In reply to the expostulations of the latter, Richardson frankly stated his own noble plan, of which he had too just a conception to alter it, in compliance with the remonstrances of his correspondents.

"Indeed you are not *particular* in your wishes for a happy ending, as it is called. Nor can I go through some of the scenes myself without being sensibly touched. (Did I not say that I was another Pygmalion?) But yet I had to show, for example sake, a young lady struggling nobly with the greatest difficulties, and triumphing from the best motives, in the course of distresses, the tenth part of which would have sunk even manly hearts; yet tenderly educated, born to affluence, naturally meek, although, where an exertion of spirit was necessary, manifesting herself to be a true heroine."[1]

Defeated in this point, the friends and correspondents of Richardson became even more importunate for the reformation of Lovelace, and the winding up the story by his happy union with Clarissa. On

[1] Correspondence of Richardson, vol. iv., p. 186.

this subject also, Cibber ranted and the ladies implored, with an earnestness that seems to imply at once a belief that the persons in whom they interested themselves had an existence, and that it was in the power of the writer of their memoirs to turn their destiny which way he pleased; and one damsel, eager for the conversion of Lovelace, implores Richardson to "save his soul;" as if there had been actually a living sinner in the case, and his future state had literally depended on the decision to be pronounced by her admired author.

Against all these expostulations Richardson hardened himself. He knew that to bestow Clarissa upon the repentant Lovelace would have been to undermine the fabric he had built. This was the very purpose which the criminal had proposed to himself in the atrocious crime he had committed, and it was to dismiss him from the scene rewarded, not punished. The sublimity of the moral would have been altogether destroyed, since vice would have been no longer rendered hateful and miserable through its very success, nor virtue honoured and triumphant even by its degradation. The death of Clarissa alone could draw down on the guilty head of her betrayer the just and necessary retribution, and his guilt was of far too deep a dye to be otherwise expiated. Besides, the author felt, and forcibly pointed out, the degradation which the fervent creation of his fancy must have sustained, could she, with all her wrongs forgotten, and with the duty imposed on her by matrimony, to love, honour, and obey her betrayer, have sat down the commonplace good wife of her reformed rake.

Indeed, those who peruse the work with attention, will perceive that the author has been careful, in the earlier stages of his narrative, to bar out every prospect of such a union. Notwithstanding the levities and constitutional good-humour of Lovelace, his mind is too much perverted, his imagination too much inflamed, by his own insane Quixotism, and, above all, his heart is too much hardened, to render it possible for any one seriously to think of his conversion as sincere, or his union with Clarissa as happy. He had committed a crime for which he deserved death by the law of the country; and notwithstanding those good qualities with which the author has invested him, that he may not seem an actual incarnate fiend, there is no reader but feels vindictive pleasure when Morden passes the sword through his body.

On the other hand, Clarissa, reconciled to her violator, must have lost, in the eye of the reader, that dignity, with which the refusal of his hand, the only poor reparation he could offer, at present invests her; and it was right and fitting that a creature, every way so excellent, should, as is fabled of the ermine, pine to death on account of the stain with which she had been so injuriously sullied. We cannot, consistently with the high idea which we have previously entertained of her purity of character, imagine her surviving the contamination. On the whole, as Richardson himself pleaded, Clarissa has, as the narrative presently stands, the greatest of triumphs even in this world—the greatest, even in and after the outrage, and because of the outrage, that any woman ever had.

It has often been observed, that the extreme severity of the parents and relatives in this celebrated novel does not belong to our day, or perhaps even to Richardson's; and that Clarissa's dutiful scruples at assuming her own estate, or extricating herself by Miss Howe's means, are driven to extremity. Something, no doubt, is to be allowed for the license of an author, who must necessarily, in order to command interest and attention, extend his incidents to the extreme verge of probability; but, besides, it is well known, that at least within the century, the notions of the *patria potestas* were of a much severer nature than those now entertained. Forced marriages in those days did sometimes actually take place, and that in houses of considerable rank; and the voice of public opinion had then comparatively little effect upon great and opulent families, inhabiting their country-seats, and living amid their own dependents, where strange violences were sometimes committed, under the specious pretext of enforcing domestic discipline. Each family was a little tribe within itself; and the near relations, like the elders among the Jews, had their Sanhedrim, where resolutions were adopted, as laws to control the free will of each individual member. It is upon this family compact that the Harlowes ground the rights which they assert with so much tyranny; and before the changes which have slackened the bonds of relationship, we believe that such incidents were not infrequent. But whether we consider Richardson as exhibiting a state of manners which may have lingered in the remote parts of England down to his own time, or

suppose that he coloured them according to his own invention, and particularly according to his high notions of the " awful rule and right supremacy," lodged in the head of a family, there can be no doubt of the spirit with which the picture is executed; and particularly of the various gradations in which the Harlowe spirit exhibits itself, in the insolent and conceited brother, the mean and envious sister, the stern and unrelenting father, softened down in the elder brother James, and again roughened and exaggerated in the old seaman Anthony, each of whom, in various modifications, exhibits the same family features of avarice, pride, and ambition.

Miss Howe is an admirably sketched character, drawn in strong contrast to that of Clarissa, yet worthy of being her friend—with more of worldly perspicacity, though less of abstracted principle; and who, when they argue upon points of doubt and delicacy, is often able, by going directly to the question at issue, to start the game, while her more gifted correspondent does but beat the bush. Her high spirit and disinterested devotion for her friend, acknowledging, as she does on all occasions, her own inferiority, show her in a noble point of view; and though we are afraid she must have given honest Hickman (notwithstanding her resolutions to the contrary) rather an uneasy time of it after marriage, yet it is impossible not to think that she was a prize worth suffering for.

The publication of *Clarissa* raised the fame of the author to the height. No work had appeared before, perhaps none has appeared since, containing

so many direct appeals to the passions, stated too in a manner so irresistible. And high as his reputation stood in his own country, it was even more exalted in those of France and Germany, whose imaginations are more easily excited, and their passions more easily moved by tales of fictitious distress, than are the cold-blooded English. Foreigners of distinction have been known to visit Hampstead, and to enquire for the Flask-walk, distinguished as a scene in Clarissa's history, just as travellers visit the rocks of Meillerie to view the localities of Rousseau's tale of passion. Diderot vied with Rousseau in heaping incense upon the shrine of the English author. The former compares him to Homer, and predicts for his memory the same honours which are rendered to the Father of Epic poetry; and the last, besides his well-known burst of eloquent panegyric, records his opinion in a letter to D'Alembert: "On n'a jamais fait encore, en quelque langue que ce soit, de roman égal à Clarisse, ni même approchant."[1]

[1] ["The fervent opinion of Rousseau," says Mr D'Israeli, "must be familiar to every reader; but Diderot, in his eloge on Richardson, exceeds even Rousseau in the enthusiasm of his feelings. I extract some of the most interesting passages. 'Of Clarissa,' he says, 'I yet remember with delight the first time it came into my hands. I was in the country. How deliciously I was affected! At every moment I saw my happiness abridged by a page. I then experienced the same sensations those feel who have long lived with one they love, and are on the point of separation. At the close of the work, I seemed to remain deserted.' The impassioned Diderot then breaks forth, 'O Richardson! thou singular genius in my eyes! thou shalt form my reading in all times. If forced by sharp necessity, my friend falls into indigence; if the mediocrity of my

There was never, perhaps, an author who was not encouraged by popular applause again to venture himself before the public; and Richardson, secure, moreover, in the prepossession of a large party of friends and admirers, was, of course, no exception to the general rule.

The subject of the third and last novel of this eminent author seems to have been in a great degree dictated by the criticism which *Clarissa* had undergone. To his own surprise, as he assured his correspondents, he found that the gaiety, spirit, and, occasionally, generosity of Lovelace, joined to his courage and ingenuity, had, in spite of his crimes, made him find too much grace in the eyes of his fair readers. He had been so studious to prevent this, that when he perceived his rake was rising into an undue and dangerous degree of favour with some of the young ladies of his own school, he threw in some darker shades of character. In

fortune is not sufficient to bestow on my children the necessary cares for their education, I will sell my books—but thou shalt remain! Yes, thou shalt rest in the *same class* with Moses, Homer, Euripides, and Sophocles, to be read alternately!' And again, 'Oh Richardson! I dare pronounce that the most veritable history is full of fictions, and thy romances are full of truths. History paints some individuals, thou paintest the human species. History attributes to some individuals what they have neither said nor done; all that thou attributest to man he has said and done,' &c., &c. 'Painter of nature, thou never liest!'

"It is probable," adds M. D'Israeli, "that to a Frenchman the *style* of Richardson is not so objectionable when translated as to ourselves. The misfortune of Richardson was, that he was unskilful in the art of writing, and that he could never lay the pen down while his inkhorn supplied it."—*Curiosities of Literature*, First Series.]

this, according to the eulogy of Johnson, he was eminently successful; but still Lovelace appeared too captivating in the eyes of his fair friends, and even of Lady Bradshaigh; so that nothing remained for the author, in point of morality, but to prepare with all speed an antidote to the poison which he had incautiously administered.

With this view, the writer tasked his talents to embody the *beau idéal* of a virtuous character, who should have all the title to admiration which he could receive from wit, rank, figure, accomplishment, and fashion, yet compounded inseparably with the still higher qualifications which form the virtuous citizen and the faithful votary of religion. It was with this view that Richardson produced the work, originally denominated *The Good Man;* a title which, before publication, he judiciously exchanged for that of *Sir Charles Grandison.*

It must be acknowledged, that although the author exerted his utmost ability to succeed in the task which he had assumed, and, so far as detached parts of the work are considered, has given marks of the same genius which he employed in his former novels, yet this last production has neither the simplicity of the two first volumes of *Pamela,* nor the deep and overwhelming interest of the inimitable *Clarissa,* and must, considering it as a whole, be ranked considerably beneath both these works.

The principal cause of failure may be perhaps traced to Richardson's too strong recollection of the aversion which his friendly critics and correspondents had displayed to the melancholy scenes

in *Clarissa*, in which, darkening and deepening as the story proceeds, his heroine is involved, until the drama is closed by death. He was resolved (perhaps) to give his readers some indemnification, and having formerly shown them virtue in its state of earthly persecution and calamity, now resolved to introduce her, as John Bunyan says, in her golden slippers, and walking abroad in the sunshine. But the author did not sufficiently reflect, that the beacon, upon an exposed headland, sending forth its saving light amid the rain and the storm, and burning where all around combines to its extinction, is a far grander and more interesting object to the imagination than the chandelier in a lordly hall, secured by walls and casements from the possibility even of a transient breeze agitating its brilliancy of lustre.

Sir Charles Grandison is a man of large fortune, of rank and of family, high in the opinion of all who know him, and discharging with the most punctilious accuracy his duties in every relation of life. But in order to his doing so, he is accommodated with all those exterior advantages which command awe and attract respect, although entirely adventitious to excellence of principle. He is munificent, but his fortune bears out his generosity; he is affectionate in his domestic relations, but the devoted attachment of his family leaves him no temptation to be otherwise; his temperament is averse from excess; his passions are under the command of his reason; his courage has been so often proved, that he can safely, and without reproach of the world, prefer the dictates of Chris-

tianity to the rules of modern honour; and in adventuring himself into danger, he has all the strength and address of Lovelace himself to trust to. Sir Charles encounters no misfortunes, and can hardly be said to undergo any trials. The author, in a word, has sent him forth

> ———" victorious,
> Happy, and glorious."

The only dilemma to which he is exposed in the course of the seven volumes, is the doubt which of two beautiful and accomplished women, excellent in disposition and high in rank, sister excellences as it were, both being devotedly attached to him, he shall be pleased to select for his bride; and this with so small a shade of partiality towards either, that we cannot conceive his happiness to be endangered wherever his lot may fall, except by a generous compassion for her, whom he must necessarily relinquish. Whatever other difficulties surround him occasionally, vanish before his courage and address; and he is almost secure to make friends, and even converts, of those whose machinations may for a moment annoy him. In a word, Sir Charles Grandison "walks the course" without competition or rivalry.

All this does well enough in a funeral sermon or monumental inscription, where, by privilege of suppressing the worst qualities and exaggerating the better, such images of perfection are sometimes presented. But in the living world, a state of trial and a valley of tears, such unspotted worth, such unvarying perfection, is not to be met with; and, what is still more important, it could not, if we sup-

pose it to have existence, be attended by all those favours of fortune which are accumulated upon Richardson's hero;—and hence the fatal objection, of Sir Charles Grandison being the

———" faultless monster that the world ne'er saw."

It is not the moral and religious excellence of Sir Charles which the reader is so much disposed to quarrel with, as that, while Richardson designs to give a high moral lesson by the success of his hero, he has failed through resting that success on circumstances which have nothing to do either with morality or religion, but might have been, if indeed they are not, depicted as the properties of Lovelace himself. It is impossible that any very deep lesson can be derived from contemplating a character, at once of unattainable excellence, and which is placed in circumstances of worldly ease and prosperity that render him entirely superior to temptation. Propose the example of Sir Charles Grandison to the sordid spirit, he will answer:—I will be generous when I have such an estate:—to the unkind brother or the cold friend—I will be affectionate, (is the ready answer), when I meet such reciprocity of tenderness. Ask him who fears the reproach of the world, why he gives or accepts a challenge?—I would do neither, he replies, were my reputation for courage established like that of Sir Charles Grandison. The timid may excuse himself for not being bold in the defence of innocence, because he has neither Sir Charles's resolution, nor that inimitable command of his sword, which enables the hero to baffle, and, in case of

need, to disarm, all who may oppose his interference. Even the libertine will plead difference of temperament and habits, and contend, that Sir Charles had all his passions under such complete subjugation, that there was no more danger of his being hurried off by them, than that his six long-tailed horses should run away with his chariot. He does, unquestionably, now and then, in his communications to Dr Bartlett and others, speak of his naturally passionate temperament as if it were still existing; but we see so little of its effects, or rather it appears, in spite of his own report, so utterly subdued and withered within him, that the only purpose of the confession seems to be, the adding this trait of modesty and humiliation to the more splendid virtues of the hero.

After all, there may, in this reasoning, be much of the perversity of human nature, which is always ready, like Job's tempter, to dispute that worth which has not been proved by adversity. But it was human nature which the author proposed to instruct; and, therefore, to human nature and its feelings, he should have adapted his example of piety and morality.

To take the matter less gravely, and consider *Sir Charles Grandison* as a work of amusement, it must be allowed, that the interest is destroyed in a great measure by the unceasing ascendency given to the fortune, as well as the character, of the hero. We feel he is too much under the special protection of the author to need any sympathy of ours, and that he has nothing to dread from all the Pollexfens, O'Haras, and so forth, in the world, so long as

Richardson is decidedly his friend. Neither are our feelings much interested about him even while his fate is undetermined. He evinces too little passion, and certainly no preference, being clearly ready, with heart and good-will, to marry either Clementina or Harriet Byron, as circumstances may render most proper, and to "bow gracefully upon the hand" of the rejected lady, and bid her adieu.

Lady Bradshaigh, the frankest of Richardson's correspondents, states this objection to him in full force, and without ceremony:—"You have made me bounce off my chair with reading that two good girls were in love with your hero, and that he was fond of both. I have such despicable notions of a divided love, that I cannot have an idea how a worthy object can entertain such a thought." The truth is, that Richardson was always arguing for the superiority of duty and principle over feeling, and, not very wisely perhaps, in an abstract view at least, set himself willingly to the task of combating even the sentiment of honest and virtuous love, considered as a passion, although implanted by nature in our breasts for the wisest, as well as kindest purposes, and leading, were it only by carrying our views and wishes beyond ourselves, to many more good consequences, under the modification of reason, than to evil, numerous as these may be, when it hurries us beyond reason's limits. So far did the author carry his contempt and defiance of Cupid, who had, down to his time, been the omnipotent deity of romance, as even to alarm Lady Bradshaigh by some hypothetical arguments in favour of poly-

gamy, a system which goes to exclude individual preferences with a vengeance.

All this must be pardoned to the honest and kind-hearted Richardson, partly for argument's sake, partly because he had very high notions of the rights of the husband, as well as those of the master. It may be some comfort to the ladies to know, as appears from some passages in his Correspondence, that, like James the First of England, his despotism consisted more in theory than in practice; and that Mrs Richardson appears to have had her full share of practical authority and control in whatever related to their quiet family.

Regarding Sir Charles, then, merely as the twenty-thousand prize, which was to be drawn by either of the ladies who might be so lucky as to win it, and whose own inclinations scarcely decided him more to the one than to the other, it is clear that the interest must rest—no very flattering thing for the fair sex—upon that predilection which the reader may entertain for the English or for the Italian lady. And with respect to Miss Byron, amiable as she is represented, and with qualities supposed to approach almost to those of Clarissa in her happiest state, there attaches a sort of indelicacy, of which we must suppose Clarissa, in similar circumstances, entirely incapable. She literally forms a league in Sir Charles's family, and among his friends, for the purpose of engaging his affections, and is contented to betray the secret of her own love, even when she believes it unreturned—a secret which every delicate mind holds so sacred—not only to the sister of Sir Charles and old Dr

Bartlett, but to all her own relations, and the Lord knows whom besides, who are all to be edified by the perusal of Sir Charles's letters. Most readers have felt that this conduct on Miss Byron's part, though designed only to elevate the hero, has the contrary effect of degrading the character of the heroine.

The real heroine of the work, and the only one in whose fortunes we take a deep and decided interest, is the unhappy Clementina, whose madness, and indeed her whole conduct, is sketched with the same exquisite pencil which drew the distresses of Clarissa. There are in those passages relating to her, upon which we do not dwell, familiar as they must be to all our readers, scenes which equal any thing that Richardson ever wrote, and which would alone be sufficient to rank him with the highest name in his line of composition. These, with other detached passages in the work, serve to show that it was no diminution in Richardson's powers, but solely the adoption of an inferior plan, which renders his two earlier works preferable to *Sir Charles Grandison.*

The structure of *Sir Charles Grandison* being wholly different from that of *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, enabled the author entirely to avoid, in his last work, some free and broad descriptions, which were unavoidable while detailing the enterprises of Mr B—— or Lovelace. But though he was freed from all temptation to fall into indelicate warmth of description, a fault which the grosser age of our fathers endured better than ours, Richardson was still unfortunate in assuming the tone of elegance

and of high fashion, to which, in his last work, he evidently aspired. Mr B—— is a country squire; the Harlowes, a purse-proud and vulgar race; Lovelace himself a *roué* in point of manners; Lord M—— has the manners and sentiments of an old rural gossip; and the vivacity of Miss Howe often approaches to vulgarity. Many models must have been under the observant eye of Richardson, extensive as his acquaintance was through all, excepting the highest circle of fashion, from which he might have drawn such characters, or at least have borrowed their manners and language.

But our author's aspiring to trace the manners of the great, as in *Sir Charles Grandison*, has called down the censure of an unquestionable judge, and who appears, in his case, disposed to be a severe critic. Lady Mary Wortley Montague, in her inimitable *Letters*, has the following passages:—"His Anna Howe and Charlotte Grandison are recommended as patterns of charming pleasantry, and applauded by his saint-like dames, who mistake folly for wit and humour, and impudence and ill-nature for spirit and fire. Charlotte behaves like a humorsome child, and should have been used like one, and whipped in the presence of her friendly confederate, Harriet.—He (Richardson) has no idea of the manners of high life; his old Lord M—— talks in the style of a country justice, and his virtuous young ladies romp like the wenches round a May-pole. Such liberties as pass between Mr Lovelace and his cousins, are not to be excused by the relation. I should have been much astonished if Lord Denbigh should have offered to kiss

me; and I dare swear, Lord Trentham never attempted such impertinence to you."[1]

It is no disrespect to Richardson to say, that he could not have had many opportunities of seeing the manners of high life; for society is formed upon principles different entirely from a selection of the best and wisest men; and the author's condition, though far from being low, indigent, or disrespectable, placed him in a humbler and happier rank. But there is one sort of good-breeding which is natural and unchangeable, and another, which, consisting of an acquaintance with the evanescent manners and fashions of the day, is merely conventional, and is perpetually changing, like the modes of dress observed in the same circles. The principles of the first are imprinted in every bosom of sense and delicacy. But to be ignorant of the latter, only shows that an author is not very conversant with the society where those flitting rules are observed, or, what may be equally the case, is incapable of tracing their changeful and fading hues. To transgress the rules of natural good-breeding, or to represent characters by whom they should be practised as doing so, is a want of taste which must adhere as a blemish to the work so long as it is read. But crimes against conventional good-breeding run a prescriptive course, and cease to be observed when the rules transgressed have, according to the usual mutability of fashion, been superseded by others. Such errors are like Livy's patavinity, which became imperceptible to latter readers.

1 Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, vol. iv., p. 182.

It was natural that a person of Lady Mary Wortley Montague's taste and rank should be shocked at the want of decorum which she complains of, but at this distance of time we are not sufficiently acquainted with the fashions of George the Second's reign to share her displeasure. We know in general, that salutation continued for a long period to be permitted by fashion, as much as the more lately licensed freedoms of shaking hands and offering the arm; and with this general knowledge it is of little consequence to us, at what particular year of God men of quality were restrained from kissing their cousins, or whether Richardson has made an anachronism in that important matter. The merit of Lovelace, considered as a portrait, remains to us the same, notwithstanding that wig, which is now frozen to his head amid his sentimental attendance in the ivy-coppice, and anon skimmed into the fire when he receives the fatal news of Clarissa's death. We think as little of dress or fashion as when we gaze on the portraits of Vandyke, without asking whether the ruff and the sleeve be or be not precisely of the cut of the period. Lovelace, whether exactly corresponding to the minute fashions of his own time or no, continues equally to be what he is described in the nervous language of Johnson, in his *Life of Rowe*. "The character of Lothario seems to have been expanded by Richardson into that of Lovelace; but he has excelled his original in the moral effect of the fiction. Lothario, with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which cannot be despised, retains too much of the spectator's kindness. It was in the power

of Richardson alone, to teach us at once esteem and detestation; to make virtuous resentment overpower all the benevolence which wit, and elegance, and courage, naturally excite; and to lose at last the hero in the villain."[1]

Still, however, it is impossible altogether to vindicate Richardson from Lady Mary's charge, or to pronounce him wholly guiltless of trespassing upon the essence of good-breeding, as well as upon its temporary rules and modifications. Lady G—— has as much horse-play in her raillery as Miss Howe, and her lord is a double of Mr Hickman. Now there ought to have been a difference betwixt the vivacity of a country-bred young lady, trained up under a sufficiently vulgar mother, and that of Miss Grandison, who had always lived in the very first society; and this Lady Mary has a just right to complain of.

There is a fault also attaches to the manners of Sir Charles Grandison himself, though doubtless intended as a model of elegance and courtesy. The very care which the author has taken to deck his manners and conversation with every becoming grace of action and words, has introduced a heavy formality, and a sort of flourishing politeness, into his whole person and deportment. His manner, in short, seems too much studied, and his talk too stiffly complimentary, *too like a printed book*, to use a Scottish phrase, to permit us to associate the

[1] Life of Richardson, vol. i., p. 108. [" As to Clarissa, I leave to those who can read it to judge and dispute. I could not do the one, and am consequently not qualified for the other."—BYRON, vol. ii., p. 309.]

ideas of gentlemanlike ease and affability, either with the one or the other. We believe this objection has been very generally entertained by the fair sex, for whose protection the laws of politeness are introduced, and who must therefore be the best judges how far they are complied with.

Notwithstanding these imperfections, and the disadvantage which a new work always sustains at first comparison with its predecessors, Richardson's fame was not diminished by the publication of his *Sir Charles Grandison*, and his fortune would have been increased but for a mercantile fraud, of a nature peculiarly audacious. By some means which he could not detect, sheet after sheet of the work as it passed the press was stolen from the author's printing-house, and sent to Dublin, where, availing themselves of the relations between the two countries as they then stood, some unprincipled booksellers prepared an Irish edition of the book, which they were thus enabled to bring into the market as soon as the author, and, by underselling him, greatly limited his deserved profits. Richardson appears in vain to have sought redress for this injustice by means of his correspondents in Ireland.[1] The union with the sister kingdom has, among other beneficial effects, had that of rendering such frauds impossible in future; and in that respect has been of the greatest service to literature.

Such is the succinct history of Richardson's productions, and such was its conclusion. It is only necessary to mention, that, besides his three cele-

[1] [For a minute detail of proceedings in this matter, see *Nichols' Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iv., p. 586 to 593.]

brated novels, he completed that collection of *Familiar Letters*, the commencement of which led the way to *Pamela*—" A work," says Mrs Barbauld, " usually found in the servant's drawer, but which when so found, has not unfrequently detained the eye of the mistress, wondering all the while by what secret charm she was induced to turn over a book, apparently too low for her perusal, and that charm was—Richardson." This work, which we have never seen, is said, by the same authority, to illustrate the extreme accuracy with which Richardson had attended to all the duties of life.

Richardson also wrote, in order to assist Dr Johnson, the ninety-seventh number of the *Rambler*, which the editor ushered in by the following deserved encomium:—" The reader is indebted for this day's entertainment to an author from whom the age has received greater favours, who has enlarged the knowledge of human nature, and taught the passions to move at the command of virtue."[1]

[1] [Number 97 bears the form of a letter, to the Editor of the Rambler, entitled, " Advice to Unmarried Ladies." Mr Croker says, " Lady Bradshaigh, one of Mr Richardson's female sycophants, thus addresses him on the subject of this letter: ' A few days ago, I was pleased with hearing a very sensible lady greatly pleased with the Rambler, No. 97. She happened to be in town when it was published; and I asked if she knew who was the author? She said, " it was supposed to be one who was concerned in the Spectator, it being much better written than any of the Ramblers." I wanted to say who was really the author, but durst not, without your permission.'—*Rich. Cor.*, vol. vi., p. 108.—It was probably on some such authority that Mr Payne told Mr Chalmers (*Brit. Ess.*, vol. xix., p. 14,) that No. 97 was 'the only paper which had a prosperous sale, and was popular.' The flatteries

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In our detailed remarks on Richardson's several novels, we have, as usual, anticipated much which we otherwise had to say concerning his general merits as an author. It will be to his immortal praise, that he was perhaps the first in this line of fictitious narrative, who threw aside the trappings of romance, with all its extravagance, and appealed to the genuine passions of the human heart. The circumstances which led him to descend from the stilts of bombast into the walks of nature, are described in his own account of the origin of *Pamela*, and he quickly discovered that it was not in humble life only that those feelings exist which find sympathy in every reader's bosom; for, if the sympathy which the distresses and the magnanimity of Clarissa excite, be not universal, we cannot envy those who are proof against their charm.

Richardson was well qualified to be the discoverer of a new style of writing, for he was a cautious, deep, and minute examinator of the human heart, and, like Cooke or Parry, left neither head, bay, nor inlet behind him, until he had traced its soundings, and laid it down in his chart, with all its minute sinuosities, its depths, and its shallows. Hence the high, and, comparatively considered, perhaps the undue superiority assigned by Johnson

which Richardson's coterie lavished on him and all his works were quite extravagant. The paper is rather a poor one." —Croker's *Boswell.—Note*, vol. i., p. 178.]

to Richardson over Fielding, against whom the Doctor seems to have entertained some prejudice. In one passage he asserts, that "there is more knowledge of the human heart in one letter of Richardson's than in all *Tom Jones*."[1] And in another, he thus explains the proposition: "There is all the difference in the world between characters of nature and characters of manners, and there is this difference between the characters of Fielding and those of Richardson. Characters of manners are very entertaining; but they are to be understood by a more superficial observer than characters of nature, where a man must dive into the recesses of the human heart." Again, in comparing these two distinguished authors, the critic uses this illustration,—"that there was as great a difference between them, as between a man who knew how a watch was made, and a man who could tell the hour by looking at the dial-plate."[2] Dissenting as we do from the conclusions to be deduced from Dr Johnson's simile, we would rather so modify it as to describe both authors as excellent mechanics; the time-pieces of Richardson showing a great deal of the internal work by which the index is regulated; while those of Fielding merely point to the hour of the day, being all that most men desire to know. Or, to take a more manageable comparison, the analogy betwixt the writings of Fielding and Richardson resembles that which free, bold, and true sketches bear to paintings that have been very minutely laboured, and which, amid their excel-

[1] [Boswell's Life of Johnson, Croker's edition, 1831, vol. ii., p. 49.]

[2] [*Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 50.]

lence, still exhibit some of the heaviness that almost always attends the highest degree of finishing. This, indeed, is admitted by Johnson himself, in his reply to the observation of the Honourable Thomas Erskine, that Richardson was tedious.— "Why, sir, if you were to read Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted, that you would hang yourself. But you must read him for the sentiment, and consider the story only as giving occasion to the sentiment." Were we to translate the controversy into plain language, it might be summed up in pronouncing the works of Richardson the more instructive, and the more deeply affecting, those of Fielding the more amusing; and that a reader might select the one or the other for his studies, according to Tony Lumpkin's phrase, as he felt himself "in a concatenation accordingly;"—with this difference, however, that he who would laugh with Fielding, may open *Tom Jones* at a venture; but he who would weep with Richardson, must be content to read through many pages, until his mind is in the mood fittest to appreciate the pathetic scenes introduced by a succession of minute and highly laboured details. This no doubt frequently occasions a suspension of the narrative, in order to afford time for the minute delineation of character. "Richardson himself has explained his principle," as is well observed by Mr D'Israeli.[1] "If," he tells us, "I give speeches

[1] [" The censure," says Mr D'Israeli, "which the Shakspeare of novelists has incurred for the tedious procrastination and the minute details of his fable; his slow unfolding characters, and the slightest gestures of his personages, is extremely un-

and conversations, I ought to give them justly, for the humours and persons of characters cannot be known, unless I repeat what they say, and their manner of saying it." This process of miniature painting has, however, its bounds; and many readers will be disposed to acquiesce in the remark of D'Alembert,—"*La Nature est bonne à imitér, mais non pas jusqu'à l'ennui.*"[1]

It is impossible to tell whether Richardson's peculiar and circumstantial mode of narrative arose entirely out of the mode in which he evolves his story by the correspondence of the actors, or whether his early partiality for letter-writting was not rather founded upon his innate love of detail. But these talents and propensities must have borne upon and fortified each other. To the letter-writer

just; for is it not evident that we could not have his peculiar excellences without these attendant effects? When characters are very fully delineated, the narrative must be suspended. Whenever the narrative is rapid, which so much delights superficial readers, the characters cannot be very minutely featured; and the writer who aims to instruct, (as Richardson avowedly did,) by the glow and eloquence of his feelings, must often sacrifice to this his local description. Richardson himself has given us the principle that guided him in composing. He tells us, '*If I give speeches,*' &c."—*Curiosities of Literature.*]

1 ["D'Alembert was a great mathematician. His literary taste was extremely cold; he was not worthy of reading Richardson. The volumes, if he ever read them, must have fallen from his hands. The delicate and subtle turnings, those folds of the human heart, which require so nice a touch, was a problem which the mathematician could never solve. There is no other demonstration in the human heart, but an appeal to its feelings; and what are the calculating feelings of an arithmetician of lines and curves? He therefore declared of Richardson, that '*La Nature est bonne,*' *&c.*"—D'Israeli —*Ibid.*]

every event is recent, and is described while immediately under the eye, without a corresponding degree of reference to its relative importance to what has past and what is to come. All is, so to speak, painted in the foreground, and nothing in the distance. A game at whist, if the subject of a letter, must be detailed as much at length as a debate in the House of Commons, upon a subject of great national interest; and hence, perhaps, that tendency to prolixity, of which the readers of Richardson frequently complain.

There is an additional advantage, tending to the same disagreeable impression, since it requires that incidents must be, in many instances, detailed again and again, by the various actors, to their different correspondents. If this affords the opportunity of placing the characters, each in their own peculiar light, and contrasting their thoughts, plans, and sentiments, that advantage is at least partly balanced, by arresting the progress of the story, which stands still while the characters show all their paces, like horses in the manege, without advancing a yard. But then it gives the reader, as Mrs Barbauld well remarks, the assurance of being thoroughly acquainted with those in whose fate he is to be interested. In consequence of this, adds that accomplished lady, "our feelings are not transient, elicited here and there by a pathetic stroke, but we regard his characters as real personages, whom we know and converse with, and whose fate remains to be decided in the course of events."[1] The

[1] Life of Richardson, vol. i., p. 82.

minute style of Richardson is accordingly attended with this peculiar advantage, that as strong a light as can be necessary is thrown on every personage who advances on the scene, and that we have as distinct an idea of the individual and peculiar character of every female in Mrs Sinclair's family whom it is necessary to name; of the greedy and hypocritical Joseph Leman; of the plausible Captain Singleton; and of Lovelace's other agents, as we have of Lovelace himself. The character of Colonel Morden, for example, although we see so little of him, is quite individual. He is high-spirited, bold, and skilful at his weapon; a man of the world and a man of honour; neither violent enough to precipitate his revenge, nor forbearing enough to avoid grasping it when the fitting opportunity offers. The awe with which he is regarded by the Harlowes even before his appearance, the respect which Clarissa entertains for him as a natural protector, prepares us for his approach as he enters on the scene, like the Avenger of Blood; too late, indeed, to save Clarissa, but a worthy vindicator of her wrongs, and a no less worthy conqueror of Lovelace. Whatever piety and forbearance there is in his cousin's last charge to such a man as Colonel Morden, we cannot for a moment be either surprised or sorry that it is disobeyed.

It must not be overlooked, that, by the circumstantial detail of minute, trivial, and even uninteresting circumstances, the author gives to his fiction an air of reality that can scarcely otherwise be obtained. In every real narrative, he who tells it, dwells upon slight and inconsiderable circumstan-

ces, no otherwise interesting than because they are associated in his mind with the more important events which he desires to communicate. De Foe, who understood, and availed himself on all occasions of this mode of garnishing an imaginary history with all the minute accompaniments which distinguish a true one, was scarce a greater master of this peculiar art, than was our author Richardson.

Still, with all these advantages, which so peculiarly adapted the mode of carrying on the story by epistolary correspondence to Richardson's peculiar genius, it has its corresponding defects. In order that all may be written, which must be known for the purpose of the narrative, the characters must frequently write, when it would be more natural for them to be acting—must frequently write what it is not natural to write at all—and must at all times write a great deal oftener, and a great deal more, than one would now think human life has time for. But these arguments did not probably weigh much with Richardson, an inveterate letter-writer from his youth upwards, and himself certainly as indefatigable (we had almost said formidable) a correspondent as any of the characters he has drawn.

Richardson was himself aware of the luxuriance of his imagination, and that he was sometimes apt to exceed the patience of the reader. He indulged his own vein, by writing without any fixed plan, and at great length, which he afterwards curtailed and compressed; so that, strange as it may seem, his compositions were reduced almost one-half in

point of size before they were committed to the press. In his two first novels, he showed much attention to the plot; and though diffuse and prolix in narration, can never be said to be rambling or desultory. No characters are introduced, but for the purpose of advancing the plot; and there are but few of those digressive dialogues and dissertations with which *Sir Charles Grandison* abounds. The story in *Pamela* and in *Clarissa* keeps the direct road, though it moves slowly. But in his last work, the author is much more excursive. There is indeed little in the plot to require attention; the various events, which are successively narrated, being no otherwise connected together, than as they place the character of the hero in some new and peculiar point of view. The same may be said of the numerous and long conversations upon religious and moral topics, which compose so great a part of the work, that a venerable old lady, whom we well knew, when in advanced age she became subject to drowsy fits, chose to hear *Sir Charles Grandison* read to her as she sat in her elbow-chair, in preference to any other work, "because," said she, "should I drop asleep in course of the reading, I am sure when I awake, I shall have lost none of the story, but shall find the party, where I left them, *conversing in the cedar-parlour*."—It is probable, after all, that the prolixity of Richardson, which, to our giddy-paced times, is the greatest fault of his writing, was not such an objection to his contemporaries. Those who with patience had studied rant and bombast in the folios of Scuderi, could not readily tire of nature, sense, and genius,

in the octavos of Richardson. But a modern reader may be permitted to wish that *Clarissa* had been a good deal abridged at the beginning, and *Sir Charles Grandison* at the end; that the last two volumes of *Pamela* had been absolutely cancelled, and the second much compressed. And, upon the whole, it might be desired that many of those trivial details of dresses and decorations, which relish, to say truth, of the mantua-makers' shops in which Richardson made his first efforts at composition, were altogether abolished, especially where they are put into the letters of sensible persons, or impertinently thrust upon us during the currency of a scene of passion. It requires the recollection of Richardson's highest powers to maintain our respect for him, where he makes Lovelace, amidst all his triumph at Clarissa's elopement, describe her dress to Belford, from top to toe, with all the professional accuracy of a man-milliner. But it is ungracious to dwell on defects, redeemed by so many excellences.

The style of Richardson was of that pliable and facile kind, which could, with slight variety, be adapted to what best befitted his various personages. When he wrote in his higher characters, it was copious, expressive, and appropriate, but, through the imperfection of his education, not always strictly elegant, nor even accurate. During his life, the common cant as usual was, that he received assistance, which, as a practical admission of personal incompetence to the task they have undertaken, we believe few men of reputed talent would stoop to accept of It is now known that

he wrote his whole works without any such aid, excepting the *Ode to Wisdom* by Mrs Carter, and a number of Latin quotations, furnished by a learned friend to bedizen the epistle of Elias Brand.

The power of Richardson's painting in his deeper scenes of tragedy, never has been, and probably never will be, excelled. Those of distressed innocence, as in the history of Clarissa and Clementina, rend the very heart; and few, jealous of manly equanimity, should read them for the first time in presence of society. In others, where the same heroines, and particularly Clarissa, display a noble elevation of soul, rising above earthly considerations and earthly oppression, the reader is perhaps as much elevated towards a pure sympathy with virtue and religion, as uninspired composition can raise him. His scenes of unmixed horror, as the deaths of Belton and of the infamous Sinclair, are as dreadful as the former are elevating; and they are directed to the same noble purpose, increasing our fear and hatred of vice, as the former are qualified to augment our love and veneration of virtue. In this respect Fielding might have paid to Richardson's genius the just tribute, which, after much depreciation of his talents in other respects, Dryden rendered to Otway—"Yet he succeeds in moving the passions, which I cannot do."

The lighter qualities of the novelist were less proper to this distinguished author than those which are allied to tragedy. Yet not even in these was Richardson deficient; and his sketches of this kind display the same accurate knowledge of humanity manifested in his higher efforts. His comedy

is not overstrained; he never steps beyond the bounds of nature, and never sacrifices truth and probability to brilliancy of effect. Without what is properly termed wit, the author possessed liveliness and gaiety sufficient to colour those comic scenes; and though he is never, like his rival Fielding, irresistibly ludicrous, nor indeed ever essays to be so, there is a fund of quaint drollery pervades his lighter sketches, which renders them very agreeable to the reader.

Without a complete copy of the Works of this distinguished and truly English classic, a collection would be deplorably deficient; yet the change of taste and of fashion, from the causes we have freely stated, has thrown a temporary shade over Richardson's popularity.[1] Or, perhaps, he may, in the

[1] [" The elegant and fascinating productions which honoured the name of novel, those which Richardson, Mackenzie, and Burney gave to the public; of which it was the object to exalt virtue and degrade vice; to which no fault could be objected, unless that they unfitted here and there a romantic mind for the common intercourse of life, while they refined perhaps a thousand whose faculties could better bear the fair ideal which they presented—these have entirely vanished from the shelves of the circulating library. It may indeed be fairly alleged in defence of those who decline attempting this higher and more refined species of composition, that the soil was in some degree exhausted by over-cropping—that the multitude of base and tawdry imitations obscured the merit of the few which are tolerable, as the overwhelming blaze of blue, red, green, and yellow, at the exhibition, vitiates our taste for the few good paintings which show their modest hues upon its walls. The public was indeed weary of the protracted embarrassments of lords and ladies who spoke such language as was never spoken, and still more so of the see-saw correspondence between the sentimental Lady Lucretia and

present generation, be only paying, by comparative neglect, the price of the very high reputation which he enjoyed during his own age. For if immortality, or any thing approaching to it, is granted to authors, and to their works, it seems only to be on the conditions assigned to that of Nourjahad, in the beautiful Eastern tale, that they shall be liable to occasional intervals of slumber and comparative oblivion. Yet under all these disadvantages, the genius of Richardson must be ever acknowledged to have done honour to the language in which he wrote, and his manly and virtuous application of his talents to have been of service to morality, and to human nature in general.

the witty Miss Caroline, who battledored it in the pathetic and the lively, like Morton and Reynolds on the stage."—*Quarterly Review*, May, 1810, p. 340.]

HENRY FIELDING.

Of all the works of imagination, to which English genius has given origin, the writings of Henry Fielding are, perhaps, most decidedly and exclusively her own. They are not only altogether beyond the reach of translation, in the proper sense and spirit of the word, but we even question, whether they can be fully understood, or relished to the highest extent, by such natives of Scotland and Ireland, as are not habitually and intimately acquainted with the characters and manners of Old England. Parson Adams, Towwouse, Partridge, above all, Squire Western, are personages as peculiar to England, as they are unknown to other countries. Nay, the actors, whose characters are of a more general cast, as Allworthy, Mrs Miller, Tom Jones himself, and almost all the subordinate agents in the narrative, have the same cast of nationality, which adds not a little to the verisimilitude of the tale. The persons of the story live in England, travel in England, quarrel and fight in England; and scarce an incident occurs, without its being marked by something which could not well have happened in any other country. This nationality may be ascribed to the author's own habits of life, which rendered him conversant, at

different periods, with all the various classes of English society, specimens of which he has selected with inimitable spirit of choice and description, for the amusement of his readers. Like many other men of talent, Fielding was unfortunate,—his life was a life of imprudence and uncertainty; but it was while passing from the high society to which he was born, to that of the lowest and most miscellaneous kind to which his fortune condemned him, that he acquired the extended familiarity with the English character, in every rank and aspect, which has made his name immortal as a painter of national manners.

HENRY FIELDING, born 22d April, 1707, was of noble descent, the third son of General Edmund Fielding, himself the third son of the Hon. John Fielding, who was the fifth son of William, Earl of Denbigh, who died in 1655. Our author was nearly connected with the ducal family of Kingston, which boasted a brighter ornament than rank or titles could bestow, in the wit and beauty of the celebrated Lady Mary Wortley Montague. The mother of Henry Fielding was a daughter of Judge Gold, the first wife of his father the General. Henry was the only son of this marriage; but he had four sisters of the full blood, of whom Sarah, the third, was distinguished as an authoress by the history of David Simple, and other literary attempts. General Fielding married a second time, after the death of his first lady, and had a numerous family, one of whom is well remembered as a judge of police, by the title of Sir John Fielding. It is

most probable, that the expense attending so large a family, together with a natural thoughtlessness of disposition on the part of his father, occasioned Henry's being early thrown into those precarious circumstances, with which, excepting at brief intervals, he continued to struggle through life.

After receiving the rudiments of education from the Rev. Mr Oliver, who is supposed to have furnished him with the outline of Parson Trulliber's character, Fielding was removed to Eton, where he became imbued deeply with that love of classic literature, which may be traced through all his works. As his father destined him to the bar, he was sent from Eton to study at Leyden, where he is said to have given earnest attention to the civil law. Had he remained in this regular course of study, the courts would probably have gained a lawyer, and the world would have lost a man of genius; but the circumstances of General Fielding determined the chance in favour of posterity, though perhaps against his son. Remittances failed, and the young student was compelled to return, at the age of twenty, to plunge into the dissipation of London, without a monitor to warn, or a friend to support him. General Fielding, indeed, promised his son an allowance of two hundred pounds a-year; but this, as his son used to say, "any one might pay who would." It is only necessary to add, that Fielding was tall, handsome, and well-proportioned, had an expressive countenance, and possessed, with an uncommonly strong constitution, a keen relish of pleasure, with the power of enjoying the present moment, and trusting to chance for the

future,—and the reader has before him sufficient grounds to estimate the extent of his improvidence and distress. Lady Mary Wortley Montague, his kinswoman, and early acquaintance, has traced his temperament, and its consequences, in a few lines; and no one who can use her words, would willingly employ his own.

"I am sorry for Henry Fielding's death," says her ladyship, in one of her letters, upon receiving information of that event, "not only as I shall read no more of his writings, but because I believe he lost more than others, as no man enjoyed life more than he did; though few had less occasion to do so, the highest of his preferment being raking in the lowest sinks of vice and misery. I should think it a nobler and less nauseous employment, to be one of the staff-officers that conduct the nocturnal weddings. His happy constitution (even when he had, with great pains, half demolished it) made him forget every evil, when he was before a venison-pasty, or over a flask of champaigne; and I am persuaded he has known more happy moments than any prince upon earth. His natural spirits gave him rapture with his cook-maid, and cheerfulness when he was starving in a garret. There was a great similitude between his character and that of Sir Richard Steele. He had the advantage, both in learning, and, in my opinion, genius; they both agreed in wanting money, in spite of all their friends, and would have wanted it, if their hereditary lands had been as extensive as their imagination; yet each of them was so formed for happiness, it is pity he was not immortal."

Some resources were necessary for a man of pleasure, and Fielding found them in his pen, having, as he used to say himself, no alternative, but to be a hackney writer, or a hackney coachman. He at first employed himself in writing for the theatre, then in high reputation, having recently engaged the talents of Wycherley, Congreve, Vanburgh, and Farquhar. Fielding's comedies and farces were brought on the stage in hasty succession; and

play after play, to the number of eighteen, sunk or swam on the theatrical sea, betwixt the years 1727 and 1736. None of these are now known or read, excepting the mock-tragedy of *Tom Thumb*, the translated play of *The Miser*, and the farces of *The Mock-Doctor* and *Intriguing Chamber-Maid;* and yet they are the productions of an author unrivalled for his conception and illustration of character in the kindred walk of imaginary narrative.

Fielding, the first of British novelists, for such he may surely be termed, has thus added his name to that of Le Sage and others, who, eminent for fictitious narration, have either altogether failed in their dramatic attempts, or at least have fallen far short of that degree of excellence which might have been previously augured of them. It is hard to fix upon any plausible reason for a failure, which has occurred in too many instances to be the operation of mere chance, especially since *à priori* one would think the same talents necessary for both walks of literature. Force of character, strength of expression, felicity of contrast and situation, a well-constructed plot, in which the developement is at once natural and unexpected, and where the interest is kept uniformly alive, till summed up by the catastrophe—all these are requisites as essential to the labour of the novelist, as to that of the dramatist, and, indeed, appear to comprehend the sum of the qualities necessary to success in both departments. Fielding's biographers have, in this particular instance, explained his lack of theatrical success, as arising entirely from the careless haste with which he huddled up his dramatic composi-

tions; it being no uncommon thing with him to finish an act or two in a morning, and to write out whole scenes upon the paper in which his favourite tobacco had been wrapped up. Negligence of this kind will no doubt give rise to great inequalities in the productions of an author, so careless of his reputation; but will scarcely account for an attribute something like dulness, which pervades Fielding's plays, and which is rarely found in those works which a man of genius throws off "at a heat," to use Dryden's expression, in prodigal self-reliance on his internal resources. Neither are we at all disposed to believe, that an author so careless as Fielding, took much more pains in labouring his novels, than in composing his plays; and we are, therefore, compelled to seek some other and more general reason for the inferiority of the latter. This may perhaps be found in the nature of those two studies, which, intimately connected as they seem to be, are yet naturally distinct in some very essential particulars; so much so as to vindicate the general opinion, that he who applies himself with eminent success to the one, becomes, in some degree, unqualified for the other;—like the artisan, who, by a particular turn for excellence in one mechanical department, loses the habit of dexterity necessary for acquitting himself with equal reputation in another; or as the artist, who has dedicated himself to the use of water-colours, is usually less distinguished by his skill in oil-painting.

It is the object of the novel-writer, to place before the reader as full and accurate a representation of the events which he relates, as can be done by the

mere force of an excited imagination, without the assistance of material objects. His sole appeal is made to the world of fancy and of ideas, and in this consists his strength and his weakness, his poverty and his wealth. He cannot, like the painter, present a visible and tangible representation of his towns and his woods, his palaces and his castles; but, by awakening the imagination of a congenial reader, he places before his mind's eye, landscapes fairer than those of Claude, and wilder than those of Salvator. He cannot, like the dramatist, present before our living eyes the heroes of former days, or the beautiful creations of his own fancy, embodied in the grace and majesty of Kemble or of Siddons; but he can teach his reader to conjure up forms even more dignified and beautiful than theirs. The same difference follows him through every branch of his art. The author of a novel, in short, has neither stage nor scene-painter, nor company of comedians, nor dresser, nor wardrobe; words, applied with the best of his skill, must supply all that these bring to the assistance of the dramatist. Action, and tone, and gesture, the smile of the lover, the frown of the tyrant, the grimace of the buffoon,—all must be told, for nothing can be shown. Thus, the very dialogue becomes mixed with the narration; for he must not only tell what the characters actually said, in which his task is the same as that of the dramatic author, but must also describe the tone, the look, the gesture, with which their speech was accompanied,—telling, in short, all which, in the drama, it becomes the province of the actor to express. It must, therefore, frequently

happen, that the author best qualified for a province, in which all depends on the communication of his own ideas and feelings to the reader, without any intervening medium, may fall short of the skill necessary to adapt his compositions to the medium of the stage, where the very qualities most excellent in a novelist are out of place, and an impediment to success. Description and narration, which form the essence of the novel, must be very sparingly introduced into dramatic composition, and scarce ever have a good effect upon the stage. Even Puff, in *The Critic*, has the good sense to leave out "all about gilding the eastern hemisphere;" and the very first thing which the players struck out of his memorable tragedy was, the description of Queen Elizabeth, her palfrey, and her side-saddle. The drama speaks to the eye and ear; and when it ceases to address these bodily organs, and would exact from a theatrical audience that exercise of the imagination which is necessary to follow forth and embody circumstances neither spoken nor exhibited, there is an immediate failure, though it may be the failure of a man of genius. Hence it follows, that though a good acting play may be made by selecting a plot and characters from a novel, yet scarce any effort of genius could render a play into a narrative romance. In the former case, the author has only to contract the events within the space necessary for representation, to choose the most striking characters, and exhibit them in the most forcible contrast, discard from the dialogue whatever is redundant or tedious, and so dramatize the whole. But we know not any

effort of genius, which could successfully insert into a good play, those accessories of description and delineation, which are necessary to dilate it into a readable novel. It may thus easily be conceived, that he whose chief talent lies in addressing the imagination only, and whose style, therefore, must be expanded and circumstantial, may fail in a kind of composition where so much must be left to the efforts of the actor, with his allies and assistants the scene-painter and property-man, and where every attempt to interfere with their province, is an error unfavourable to the success of the piece. Besides, it must be farther remembered, that in fictitious narrative an author carries on his manufacture alone, and upon his own account; whereas, in dramatic writing, he enters into partnership with the performers, and it is by their joint efforts that the piece is to succeed. Copartnery is called, by Civilians, the mother of discord; and how likely it is to prove so in the present instance, may be illustrated by reference to the admirable dialogue between the Player and the Poet in *Joseph Andrews*, book iii., chap. 10. The poet must either be contented to fail, or to make great condescensions to the experience, and pay much attention to the peculiar qualifications, of those by whom his piece is to be represented. And he who in a novel had only to fit sentiments, action, and character, to the ideal beings, is now compelled to assume the much more difficult task of adapting all these to real existing persons, who, unless their parts are exactly suited to their own taste, and their peculiar capacities, have, each in his line, the

means, and not unfrequently the inclination, to ruin the success of the play. Such are, amongst many others, the peculiar difficulties of the dramatic art, and they seem impediments which lie peculiarly in the way of the novelist who aspires to extend his sway over the stage.[1]

[1] [" This account of the matter, interesting and in many parts ingenious as it is, appears to us to be on the whole rather unsatisfactory. In the first place, Sir Walter accounts for the dramatic failures of his novelists, by suggesting that they had lost, in the habitual exercise of their talents for narrative, the 'particular turn' requisite for the attainment of excellence in the drama. But, unfortunately for this theory, the fact is, that Cervantes, Le Sage, Fielding, Smollett, began, one and all of them, with the drama, and, *after* failing in that, betook themselves to the efforts by which they have earned their immortality. No one instance is presented to us of a practised and successful dramatist trying his hand unsuccessfully at the novel; and yet it seems to be throughout assumed, that the frequent occurrence of such examples constitutes the principal difficulty to be solved. Another assumption, equally bold, and, as it seems to us, equally unfounded, is, that though a good acting play may be made by selecting a plot and characters from a novel, yet scarcely any effort of genius could render a play into a narrative romance. Now, in the first place, the former attempt (in the sense in which Sir Walter speaks of the matter) never has been made but once, by an author from whose talents any degree of success might have been *à priori* expected. Werner is in every point of view an anomaly, and we cannot consent to draw from it any general conclusion whatever. Such borrowing both of plot and character as we can trace in regard to almost every one of Shakspeare's plays, is nothing to the present purpose; for there infinitely more both of quantity and quality was added than taken. But who can suppose, that a man of genius in his senses ever will condescend to busy himself with transferring another man's complete extended plot, and all its full-length characters, from one form of composition to another —either from drama to romance, or from romance to drama?

Another circumstance may in the present day greatly interfere with the success of dramatic authors, and arises from the decay of that familiar acquaintance with the stage and its affairs, which prevailed during the more splendid days of the British theatre. It requires a frequent and close

Secondly, in point of fact, no good acting play has ever been produced in the way Sir Walter describes. We have no *good* acting play from Don Quixote, or Gil Blas, or Tom Jones, or Roderick Random, or Waverley. The popular novels of the day are often, indeed, *dramatized*, in a certain sense of the word, and the people flock to see them. But are any such performances entitled to be talked of as good acting plays? On the contrary, the best of them that we have seen (for example Rob Roy) must be admitted to amount to an arbitrary sequence of individual scenes, which would be unintelligible to any audience that wanted the means of filling up, every here and there, the most lamentable and hopeless *hiatus*, from previous and perfect knowledge of the not merely plundered, but maimed, mutilated, mangled romance; and accordingly, whenever the romance passes from its first stage of extreme *popular* favour, the good acting play is sure to follow it. Fielding and Smollett had their day of being, as the author of Waverley somewhere styles the process, *Terryfied.* Miss Burney shared for her hour the same distinction; and so but yesterday, as it seems to us, did a greater than she, already almost equally forgotten by the mob of gallery *readers*,—Miss Edgeworth. Before Sir Walter is entitled to argue as he has done, he must, at the least, show us, on the one hand, an author of Macbeth trying in vain to write an historical romance, or a full-grown Moliere failing in a novel; and, on the other, an author of Waverley making a deliberate but fruitless inroad on the province of the drama. Had Don Quixote been an early production of Cervantes; had Le Sage written the Point d'Honneur, or even Turcaret, after his Diable Boiteux: had Fielding written weak plays after Tom Jones; or Smollett dull ones after Humphry Clinker,—the best, perhaps, in every respect, of his works, at all events by much the most dramatic,—there might have been something in such cases; but even they would, for reasons too obvious to need stating, have been insufficient."—*Quarterly Review*, *Sept.* 1826.]

attendance upon the stage to learn the peculiar points which interest an audience, and the art of forming the *situations*, as they are technically called, which arrest attention and bring down applause. This is a qualification for dramatic excellence, which fashionable hours and modern manners render difficult to any one who is not absolutely himself an actor. Nevertheless it is of such consequence, that it will be found, that the dullest and worst plays, written by authors who have themselves trod the stage, are, however intolerable in the closet, redeemed, in action, by some felicitous position or encounter of persons, which makes them pass muster on the boards. But this observation, though arising naturally out of the subject, cannot be said to apply to Fielding, much of whose life had probably been passed behind the scenes, and who had, indeed, as we shall see, been at one time a sort of manager himself.

We have noticed, that until the year 1737, or thereabouts, Fielding lived the life of a man of wit and pleasure about town, seeking and finding amusement in scenes of gaiety and dissipation, and discharging the expense incidental to such a life, by the precarious resources afforded by the stage. He even became, for a season, the manager of a company, having assembled together, in 1735, a number of discarded comedians, who, he proposed, should execute his own dramas at the little theatre in the Haymarket, under the title of the Great Mogul's Company of Comedians. The project did not succeed; and the company, which, as he expressed it, had seemed to drop from the clouds, were under the necessity of disbanding.

During his theatrical career, Fielding, like most authors of the time, found it impossible to interest the public sufficiently in the various attempts which he made to gain popular favour, without condescending to flatter their political animosities. Two of his dramatic pieces, *Pasquin*, and *The Historical Register*, display great acrimony against Sir Robert Walpole, from whom, in the year 1730, he had in vain sought for patronage.[1] The freedom of his

[1] [We preserve the verses addressed to Walpole on this occasion, as a specimen of Fielding's poetry.

While at the helm of state you ride,
Our nation's envy and its pride;
While foreign courts with wonder gaze,
And curse those councils which they praise;
Would you not wonder, sir, to view
Your bard, a greater man than you?
Which that he is, you cannot doubt,
When you have read the sequel out.

You know, great sir, that ancient fellows,
Philosophers, and such folks, tell us,
No great analogy between
Greatness and happiness is seen.
If then, as it might follow straight,
Wretched to be, is to be *great*;
Forbid it, gods, that you should try
What 'tis to be so great as I!

The family that dines the latest,
Is in our street esteem'd the greatest;
But latest hours must surely fall
For him who never dines at all.

Your taste in architect, you know,
Hath been admired by friend and foe;
But can your earthly domes compare
With all my castles—in the air?

We're often taught it does behove us
To think those greater, who're above us;
Another instance of my glory,
Who live above you, twice two story;
And from my garret can look down
On the whole street of Arlington.

satire is said to have operated considerably in producing a measure which was thought necessary to arrest the license of the stage, and put an end to that proneness to personal and political satire which had been fostered by the success of Gay's *Beggars' Opera.* This measure was the discretional power vested in the Lord Chamberlain, of refusing a license to any piece of which he should disapprove. The regulation was the cause of much clamour at the time; but licentious satire has since found so many convenient modes of access to the public, that its exclusion from the stage is no longer a

Greatness by poets still is painted
With many followers acquainted:
This, too, doth in my favour speak;
Your levee is but twice a-week,
From mine I can exclude but one day,
My door is quiet on a Sunday.

Nor in the manner of attendance,
Doth your great bard claim less ascendance.
Familiar you to admiration
May be approached by all the nation;
While I, like the Mogul in *Indo*,
Am never seen but at my window.
If with my greatness you're offended,
The fault is easily amended;
For I'll come down, with wondrous ease,
Into whatever *place* you please.
I'm not ambitious, little matters
Will serve us great, but humble creatures.

Suppose a secretary o' this isle,
Just to be doing with a while;
Admiral, general, judge, or bishop,
Or I can foreign treaties dish up.
If the good genius of the nation
Should call me to negotiation,
Tuscan and French are in my head,
Latin I write, and *Greek*—I read.

If you should ask, what pleases best?
To get the most, and do the least;
What fitted for? You know, I'm sure,
I'm fittest for—a *sinecure.*]

matter of interest or regret; nor is it now deemed a violent aggression on liberty, that contending political parties cannot be brought into collision within the walls of the theatres, intended, as they are, for places of public amusement, not for scenes of party struggle.

About 1736, Fielding seems to have formed the resolution of settling in life. He espoused a young lady of Salisbury, named Craddock, beautiful, amiable, and possessed of L.1500. About the same time, by the death, it has been supposed, of his mother, he succeeded to a small estate of about L.200 per annum, situated at Stower, in Derbyshire, affording him, in those days, the means of decent competence. To this place he retired from London, but unfortunately carried with him the same improvident disposition to enjoy the present at expense of the future, which seems to have marked his whole life. He established an equipage, with showy liveries; and his biographers lay some stress on the circumstance, that the colour, being a bright yellow, required to be frequently renewed,—an important particular, which, in humble imitation of our accurate predecessors, we deem it unpardonable to suppress. Horses, hounds, and the exercise of an unbounded hospitality, soon aided the yellow livery-men in devouring the substance of their improvident master; and three years found Fielding without land, home, or revenue, a student in the Temple, where he applied himself closely to the law, and after the usual term was called to the bar. It is probable, he brought nothing from Derbyshire save that experience of a rural life, and its

pleasures, which afterwards enabled him to delineate the inimitable Squire Western.

Fielding had now a profession, and, as he strongly applied his powerful mind to the principles of the law, it might have been expected that success would have followed in proportion. But those professional persons who can advance or retard the practice of a young lawyer, mistrusted, probably, the application of a wit and a man of pleasure, to the business they might otherwise have confided to him; and it is said, that Fielding's own conduct was such as to justify their want of confidence Disease, the consequence of a free life, came to the aid of dissipation of mind, and interrupted the course of Fielding's practice by severe fits of the gout, which gradually impaired his robust constitution.[1] We find him, therefore, having again recourse to the stage, where he attempted to produce a continuation of his own piece of *The Virgin Unmasqued;* but, as one of the characters was supposed to be written in ridicule of a man of quality, the Chamberlain refused his license. Pamphlets

[1] ["As long as his health permitted him," says Nichols, "he attended with punctual assiduity, both in term-time and on the Western Circuit; and it is probable that he would have arisen to considerable eminence in the law, had not the progress of his success been stopped by repeated attacks of the gout. These came so frequently upon him, that it was impossible for him to be as constant at the bar as the laboriousness of his profession required. Under this disadvantage, he still pursued his researches with an eagerness of curiosity peculiar to him; and attained such a knowledge of jurisprudence in general, and of crown-law in particular, as to leave two volumes in folio upon the latter subject."—*Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iii., p. 367.]

of political controversy, fugitive tracts, and essays, were the next means he had recourse to for subsistence; and as his ready pen produced them upon every emergency, he contrived, by the profits, to support himself and his family, to which he was fondly attached.

Amid this anxious career of precarious expedient, and constant labour, he had the misfortune to lose his wife; and his grief at this domestic calamity was so extreme, that his friends became alarmed for the consequences to his reason. The violence of the emotion, however, was transient, though his regret was lasting; and the necessity of subsistence compelled him again to resume his literary labours. At length, in the year 1741 or 1742, circumstances induced him to engage in a mode of composition, which he retrieved from the disgrace in which he found it, and rendered a classical department of British literature.

The novel of *Pamela*, published in 1740, had carried the fame of Richardson to the highest pitch; and Fielding,—whether he was tired of hearing it over-praised, (for a book, several passages of which would now be thought highly indelicate, was in those days even recommended from the pulpit,)[1] or whether, as a writer for daily subsistence, he caught at whatever interested the public for the time; or, whether, in fine, he was seduced by that wicked spirit of wit which cannot forbear turning into ridicule the idol of the day,—resolved to caricature the style, principles, and personages of this favourite performance. As Gay's desire to satirize

[1] [See Note, Life of Richardson, *ante*, p. 34, 35.]

Philips gave rise to *The Shepherd's Week*, so Fielding's purpose to ridicule *Pamela* produced the *History of Joseph Andrews;* and in both cases, but especially in the latter, a work was executed infinitely better than could have been expected to arise out of such a motive, and the reader received a degree of pleasure very different, as well as far superior, to what the author himself appears to have proposed. There is, indeed, a fine vein of irony in Fielding's novel, as will appear from comparing it with the pages of *Pamela;* but *Pamela*, to which that irony was applied, is now in a manner forgotten, and *Joseph Andrews* continues to be read, for the admirable pictures of manners which it presents, and, above all, for the inimitable character of Mr Abraham Adams,[1] which alone is sufficient to stamp the superiority of Fielding over all writers of his class. The worthy parson's learning, his simplicity, his evangelical purity of heart, and benevolence of disposition, are so admirably mingled with pedantry, absence of mind, and with the habit of athletic and gymnastic exercise, then acquired at the universities by students of all descriptions, that he may be safely termed one of the richest productions of the

[1] ["The Rev. William Young, a learned and much-esteemed friend of Mr Fielding's, sat for this picture. Mr Young was remarkable for his intimate acquaintance with the Greek writers, and was as passionate an admirer of Æschylus as Parson Adams is represented to have been. The overflowings of his benevolence were likewise as strong, and his fits of reverie as frequent. Indeed, they occurred to him on the most interesting occasions." So says Mr Nichols—see his *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iii., p. 371. Mr Young superintended and improved the edition of Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary, 2 vols. folio, 1752; and he was also employed in correcting an edition of Hederic's Greek Lexicon.]

Muse of Fiction. Like Don Quixote, Parson Adams is beaten a little too much, and too often; but the cudgel lights upon his shoulders, as on those of the honoured Knight of La Mancha, without the slightest stain to his reputation; and he is bastinadoed without being degraded. The style of this piece is said, in the preface, to have been an imitation of Cervantes; but both in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, the author appears also to have had in view the *Roman Comique* of the once celebrated Scarron. From this author he has copied the mock heroic style, which tells ludicrous events in the language of the classical Epic; a vein of pleasantry which is soon wrought out, and which Fielding has employed so often as to expose him to the charge of pedantry.

Joseph Andrews was eminently successful; and the aggrieved Richardson, who was fond of praise even to adulation, was proportionally offended, while his group of admirers, male and female, took care to echo back his sentiments, and to heap Fielding with reproach. Their animosity survived his life, and we find the most ungenerous reproaches thrown upon his memory, in the course of Richardson's correspondence. Richardson was well acquainted with Fielding's sisters, and complained to them,—not of Fielding's usage of himself, that he was too wise, or too proud to mention,—but of his unfortunate predilection to what was mean and low in character and description. The following expressions are remarkable, as well for the extreme modesty of the writer who thus rears himself into the paramount judge of Fielding's qualities, as for

the delicacy which could intrude such observations on the ear of his rival's sister: "Poor Fielding! I could not help telling his sister, that I was equally surprised at, and concerned for, his continued lowness. Had your brother, said I, been born in a stable, or been a runner at a spunging-house, one should have thought him a genius, and wished he had had the advantage of a liberal education, and of being admitted into good company!"—After this, we are not surprised at its being alleged, that Fielding was destitute of invention and talents; that the run of his best works was nearly over; and that he would soon be forgotten as an author! Fielding does not appear to have retorted any of this ill-will; so that, if he gave the first offence, and that an unprovoked one, he was also the first to retreat from the contest, and to allow to Richardson those claims which his genius really demanded from the liberality of his contemporaries. In the fifth number of the Jacobite Journal, Fielding highly commends *Clarissa*, which is by far the best and most powerful of Richardson's novels, and, with those scenes in *Sir Charles Grandison* which refer to the history of Clementina, contains the passages of deep pathos on which his claim to immortality must finally rest. Perhaps this is one of the cases in which one would rather have sympathized with the thoughtless offender, than with the less liberal and almost ungenerous mind which so long retained its resentment.[1]

After the publication of *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding had again recourse to the stage, and brought

[1] [See Life of Richardson, *ante*, pp. 20, 38.]

out *The Wedding Day*, which, though on the whole unsuccessful, produced him some small profit. This was the last of his theatrical efforts which appeared during his life. The manuscript comedy of *The Fathers* was lost by Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, and, when recovered, was acted after the author's death for the benefit of his family.[1] An anecdote respecting the carelessness with which Fielding regarded his theatrical fame, is thus given by former biographers :—

"On one of the days of its rehearsal, (*i. e.* the rehearsal of *The Wedding Day*,) Garrick, who performed a principal part, and who was even then a favourite with the public, told Fielding, he was apprehensive that the audience would make free with him in a particular passage, and remarked, that as a repulse might disconcert him during the remainder of the night, the passage should be omitted—'No, d—n 'em,' replied he, 'if the scene is not a good one, let them find *that* out. Accordingly, the play was brought out without alteration, and, as had been foreseen, marks of disapprobation appeared. Garrick, alarmed at the hisses he had met with, retired into the green-room, where the author was solacing himself with a bottle of champagne. He had by this time drank pretty freely; and, glancing his eye at the actor, while clouds of tobacco issued from his mouth, cried out.—'What's the matter, Garrick? what are they hissing now?'—'Why, the scene that I begged you to retrench,' replied the actor; 'I knew it would not do; and they have so frightened me, that I shall not be able to collect myself again the whole night.'—'Oh! d—n 'em,' rejoined he, with great coolness, 'they *have* found it out, have they?'"

Besides various fugitive pieces, Fielding published in, or about, 1743, a volume of Miscellanies, including *The Journey from this World to the*

1 [See *Nichols' Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iii., p. 363, for curious particulars concerning this comedy's fate.]

Next, a tract containing a good deal of Fielding's peculiar humour, but of which it is difficult to conceive the plan or purport. *The History of Jonathan Wild the Great* next followed. It is not easy to see what Fielding proposed to himself by a picture of complete vice, unrelieved by any thing of human feeling, and never by any accident even deviating into virtue; and the ascribing a train of fictitious adventures to a real character, has in it something clumsy and inartificial on the one hand, and, on the other, subjects the author to a suspicion that he only used the title of Jonathan Wild, in order to connect his book with the popular renown of that infamous depredator. But there are few passages in Fielding's more celebrated works, more marked with his peculiar genius, than the scene betwixt his hero and the Ordinary, when in Newgate.

Besides these more permanent proofs of his industrious application to literature, the pen of Fielding was busily employed in the political and literary controversies of the times. He conducted one paper, called *The Jacobite Journal*, the object of which was to eradicate those feelings and sentiments which had been already so effectually crushed upon the Field of Culloden. *The True Patriot*, and *The Champion*,[1] were works of the same kind,

[1] ["A great portion of *The Champion* is employed on the follies, vices, amusements, and literature of the age; and the remainder is occupied by political wit and discussion. To every paper is annexed what is termed 'an index to the times,' consisting of news, miscellaneous and political, frequently charged with the most sarcastic irony. In the critical de-

which he entirely composed, or in which, at least, he had a principal share. In these various papers he steadily advocated what was then called the Whig cause, being attached to the principles of the Revolution, and the royal family of Brunswick, or, in other words, a person well affected to church and state.[1] His zeal was long unnoticed, while far inferior writers were enriched out of the secret-service-money with unexampled prodigality. At length, in 1749, he received a small pension, together with the then disreputable office of a Justice of Peace for Westminster and Middlesex, of which he was at liberty to make the best he could by the worst means he might choose. This office, such as it was, he owed to the interference of Mr, afterwards Lord Lyttleton.

At this period, the Magistrates of Westminster, thence termed Trading Justices, were repaid by

partment are to be found many ingenious dissertations on literary subjects."—*Quarterly Review, May*, 1809.]

[1] [" *The True Patriot*," says Mr Nichols, " was not without its effect in exciting the sentiments of loyalty, and a love for the constitution in the breasts of his (Fielding's) countrymen. Mr Addison, in his *Freeholder*, had set a fine example in this species of composition, and in Mr Fielding he had not an unworthy follower. In *The True Patriot* was displayed a solid knowledge of the British laws and government, together with occasional sallies of humour, which would have made no inconsiderable figure in the political works of the greatest wits among our author's predecessors. Another periodical paper written by him was *The Jacobites' Journal*. It appeared in the beginning of 1748, and was calculated to discredit the shattered remains of an unsuccessful party; and, by a well-applied raillery and ridicule, to bring the sentiments of the disaffected into contempt, with a view of effacing them not only from the conversation, but from the minds of men." —*Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iii., p. 373.]

fees for their services to the public; a mean and wretched system, which made it the interest of these functionaries to inflame every petty dispute which was brought before them, to trade, as it were, in guilt and in misery, and to wring their precarious subsistence out of thieves and pickpockets. The habits of Fielding, never choice or select in his society, were not improved by that to which his place exposed him. Horace Walpole gives us, in his usual unfeeling, but lively manner, the following description of a visit made to Fielding in his capacity of a Justice, by which we see his mind had stooped itself completely to his situation.

> "Rigby gave me as strong a picture of nature. He and Peter Bathurst, t'other night, carried a servant of the latter's, who had attempted to shoot him, before Fielding, who, to all his other avocations, has, by the grace of Mr Lyttleton, added that of Middlesex Justice. He sent them word he was at supper,—they must come next morning. They did not understand that freedom, and ran up, where they found him banqueting with a blind man, [Fielding's brother, probably,] a whore, and three Irishmen, on some cold mutton, and a bone of ham, both in one dish, and the dirtiest cloth. He never stirred, or asked them to sit. Rigby, who had seen him come so often to beg a guinea of Sir C. Williams, and Bathurst, at whose father's he had lived for victuals, understood that dignity as little, and pulled themselves chairs, on which he civilized."[1]

This is a humiliating anecdote, even after we have made allowance for the aristocratic exaggeration of Walpole, who, in acknowledging Fielding's talents elsewhere, has not failed to stigmatize the lowness of his society and habits.[2] Yet it is conso-

[1] Letters from the Hon. Horace Walpole to George Montague, Esq.—Lond. 1818, p. 58.

[2] In his poetical account of Twickenham, Fielding's residence in the neighbourhood is not forgotten,—

ling to observe, that Fielding's principles remained unshaken, though the circumstances attending his official situation tended to increase the careless disrespectability of his private habits. His own account of his conduct respecting the dues of the office on which he depended for subsistence, has never been denied or doubted. "I will confess," says he, "that my private affairs, at the beginning of the winter, had but a gloomy aspect; for I had not plundered the public, or the poor, of those sums which men, who are always ready to plunder both as much as they can, have been pleased to suspect me of taking; on the contrary, by composing, instead of inflaming, the quarrels of porters and beggars, (which, I blush when I say, hath not been universally practised,) and by refusing to take a shilling from a man who most undoubtedly would not have had another left, I had reduced an income of about L.500 a-year, of the dirtiest money upon earth, to little more than L.300; a considerable portion of which remained with my clerk."

Besides the disinterestedness of which he set an example unusual in those days, Fielding endeavoured, by various suggestions, to abridge the catalogue of crimes and depravity which his office placed so closely under his eye. His *Enquiry into the Increase of Thieves and Robbers*, contains several hints which have been adopted by succeeding statesmen, and some which are still worthy of more at-

"Where Fielding met his bunter muse,
And as they quaff'd the fiery juice,
Droll nature stamp'd each lucky hit,
With unimaginable wit."
The Parish Register of Twickenham.

tention than they have yet received. As a magistrate, indeed, he was desirous of retrieving the dignity and independence of his own office; and his zeal on that subject has led him a little farther than he will be followed by the friends of rational freedom. But we cannot omit mentioning, that he was the first to touch on the frequency of pardons, rendered necessary by the multiplication of capital punishments, and that he placed his finger on that swelling imposthume of the state, the poor's rates, which has wrought so much evil, and is likely to work so much more. He published also a *Charge to the Grand Jury of Middlesex*, some *Tracts concerning Law Trials* of importance, and left behind him a manuscript on Crown Law. On the subject of the poor, he afterwards published a scheme for restricting them to their parishes, and providing for them in work-houses, which, like many others which have since appeared, only showed that he was fully sensible of the evil, without being able to suggest an effectual or practical remedy. A subsequent writer on the same thorny subject, Sir Frederic Morton Eden, observes, that Fielding's treatise exhibits "both the knowledge of the magistrate, and the energy and expresssion of the novel writer."[1] It was, however, before publishing his scheme for the provision of the poor, that he

[1] [See "The State of the Poor, or a History of the Labouring Classes in England, from the Conquest to the present period, in which are particularly considered their Domestic Economy, with respect to Diet, Dress, Fuel, and Habitation, and the various plans which have been proposed and adopted for their relief, &c. By Sir Frederick Morton Eden, Bart. 3 vols. 4to. London, 1797."]

made himself immortal by the production of *Tom Jones*.

The *History of a Foundling* was composed under all the disadvantages incident to an author alternately pressed by the disagreeable task of his magisterial duties, and by the necessity of hurrying out some ephemeral essay or pamphlet to meet the demands of the passing day. It is inscribed to the Hon. Mr Lyttleton, afterwards Lord Lyttleton, with a dedication, in which he intimates, that without his assistance, and that of the Duke of Bedford, the work had never been completed, as the author had been indebted to them for the means of subsistence while engaged in composing it. Ralph Allen, the friend of Pope, is also alluded to as one of his benefactors, but unnamed, by his own desire; thus confirming the truth of Pope's beautiful couplet—

> "Let humble Allen, with an awkward shame,
> Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame."

It is said that this munificent and modest patron made Fielding a present of L.200 at one time, and that even before he was personally acquainted with him.

Under such precarious circumstances the first English novel was given to the public, which had not yet seen any works of fiction founded upon the plan of painting from nature. Even Richardson's novels are but a step from the old romance, approaching, indeed, more nearly to the ordinary course of events, but still dealing in improbable incidents, and in characters swelled out beyond the

ordinary limits of humanity. The *History of a Foundling* is truth and human nature itself, and there lies the inestimable advantage which it possesses over all previous fictions of this particular kind. It was received with unanimous acclamation by the public, and proved so productive to Millar the publisher, that he handsomely added L.100 to L.600, for which last sum he had purchased the work.

The general merits of this popular and delightful work have been so often dwelt upon, and its imperfections so frequently censured, that we can do little more than hastily run over ground which has been repeatedly occupied. The felicitous contrivance, and happy extrication of the story, where every incident tells upon and advances the catastrophe, while, at the same time, it illustrates the characters of those interested in its approach, cannot too often be mentioned with the highest approbation. The attention of the reader is never diverted or puzzled by unnecessary digressions, or recalled to the main story by abrupt and startling recurrences; he glides down the narrative like a boat on the surface of some broad navigable stream, which only winds enough to gratify the voyager with the varied beauty of its banks. One exception to this praise, otherwise so well merited, occurs in the story of the Old Man of the Hill; an episode, which, in compliance with a custom introduced by Cervantes, and followed by Le Sage, Fielding has thrust into the midst of his narrative, as he had formerly introduced the History of Leonora, equally unnecessarily and inartificially, into that of *Joseph*

Andrews. It has also been wondered, why Fielding should have chosen to leave the stain of illegitimacy on the birth of his hero ; and it has been surmised, that he did so in allusion to his own first wife, who was also a natural child. A better reason may be discovered in the story itself; for had Miss Bridget been privately married to the father of Tom Jones, there could have been no adequate motive assigned for keeping his birth secret from a man so reasonable and compassionate as Allworthy.

But even the high praise due to the construction and arrangement of the story, is inferior to that claimed by the truth, force, and spirit of the characters, from Tom Jones himself, down to Black George the gamekeeper, and his family. Amongst these, Squire Western stands alone ;[1] imitated from no prototype, and in himself an inimitable picture of ignorance, prejudice, irascibility, and rusticity, united with natural shrewdness, constitutional good-humour, and an instinctive affection for his daughter, —all which qualities, good and bad, are grounded upon that basis of thorough selfishness, natural to one bred up, from infancy, where no one dared to contradict his arguments, or to control his conduct. In one incident alone, Fielding has departed from this admirable sketch. As an English squire, Western ought not to have taken a beating so unresistingly from the friend of Lord Fellamar. We half suspect that the passage is an interpola-

[1] [" There now are no Squire Westerns as of old ;
And our Sophias are not so emphatic,
But fair as then, or fairer to behold.
We have no accomplish'd blackguards like Tom Jones,
But gentleman in stays as stiff as stones."
Don Juan, canto xiii., st. 110.]

tion. It is inconsistent with the Squire's readiness to engage in rustic affrays. We grant a pistol or sword might have appalled him; but Squire Western should have yielded to no one in the use of the English horsewhip; and as, with all his brutalities, we have a sneaking interest in the honest jolly country-gentleman, we would willingly hope there is some mistake in this matter.

The character of Jones, otherwise a model of generosity, openness, and manly spirit, mingled with thoughtless dissipation, is, in like manner, unnecessarily degraded by the nature of his intercourse with Lady Bellaston; and this is one of the circumstances which incline us to believe, that Fielding's ideas of what was gentleman-like and honourable had sustained some depreciation, in consequence of the unhappy circumstances of his life, and of the society to which they condemned him.

A more sweeping and general objection was made against the *History of a Foundling* by the admirers of Richardson, and has been often repeated since. It is alleged, that the ultimate moral of *Tom Jones*, which conducts to happiness, and holds up to our sympathy and esteem, a youth who gives way to licentious habits, is detrimental to society, and tends to encourage the youthful reader in the practice of those follies, to which his natural passions, and the usual course of the world, but too much direct him.[1] French delicacy, which, on so

[1] [“The cultivated genius of Fielding entitles him to a high rank among the classics. His works exhibit a series of pictures drawn with all the descriptive fidelity of a Hogarth.

many occasions, has strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel, saw this fatal tendency in the work, and by an *arrêt* prohibited the circulation of a bungled abridgement by De la Place, entitled a translation. To this charge Fielding himself might probably have replied, that the vices into which Jones suffers himself to fall, are made the direct cause of placing him in the distressful situation, which he occupies during the greater part of the narrative; while his generosity, his charity, and his amiable qualities, become the means of saving him from the consequences of his folly. But we suspect with Dr Johnson, that there is something of cant both in the objection, and in the answer to it. "Men," says that moralist, "will not become highwaymen, because Macheath is acquitted on the stage;" and we add, that they will not become swindlers and thieves, because they sympathize with the fortunes of the witty picaroon Gil Blas, or licentious debauchees, because they read *Tom Jones*. The professed moral of a piece is usually what the reader is least interested in; it is like the mendicant, who cripples after some splendid and gay procession, and in vain solicits the attention of those who have been gazing upon it. Excluding from consideration those infamous works, which address themselves directly to awakening the grosser passions of our nature, we are inclined to think, the worst evil to be apprehended from the perusal of

They are highly entertaining, and will always be read with pleasure; but they likewise disclose scenes, which may corrupt a mind unseasoned by experience."—Dr V. KNOX's *Essays*.]

novels is, that the habit is apt to generate an indisposition to real history, and useful literature; and that the best which can be hoped is, that they may sometimes instruct the youthful mind by real pictures of life, and sometimes awaken their better feelings and sympathies by strains of generous sentiment, and tales of fictitious woe. Beyond this point they are a mere elegance, a luxury contrived for the amusement of polished life, and the gratification of that half love of literature, which pervades all ranks in an advanced stage of society, and are read much more for amusement, than with the least hope of deriving instruction from them. The vices and follies of Tom Jones, are those which the world soon teaches to all who enter on the career ot life, and to which society is unhappily but too indulgent, nor do we believe, that, in any one instance, the perusal of Fielding's Novel has added one libertine to the large list, who would not have been such, had it never crossed the press. And it is with concern we add our sincere belief, that the fine picture of frankness and generosity, exhibited in that fictitious character, has had as few imitators as the career of his follies. Let it not be supposed that we are indifferent to morality, because we treat with scorn that affectation, which, while in common life, it connives at the open practice of libertinism, pretends to detest the memory of an author, who painted life as it was, with all its shades, and more than all the lights which it occasionally exhibits, to relieve them.[1] For particular

[1] [" With all due deference, we must take the liberty to believe, that both Dr Johnson and Sir Walter Scott had

passages of the work, the author can only be defended under the custom of his age, which permitted, in certain cases, much stronger language than ours. He has himself said, that there is nothing which can offend the chastest eye in the perusal; and he spoke probably according to the ideas of his time. But in modern estimation, there are several passages at which delicacy may justly

judged as to these matters more from the vigour of their own masculine minds than from actual observation of the world at large, as it was, and is. The Beggars' Opera did, we may admit, no harm in the boxes, but we suspect the galleries, if they could speak, might tell a very different tale. Schiller's Robbers did, all the world knows, seduce certain enthusiastic *Burschen* from the German universities to the highway; and the records of our police courts and of graver tribunals are ready to prove, that while Tom and Jerry were crowding the streets with brawlers, the Memoirs of Messrs Moffat and Haggart were leading or hurrying their victims to the gallows. In truth, to deny the influence of artificial representations of human life upon the manners of those who contemplate them, appears to us to be not very different from denying absolutely the effect of example. There are men and women, and there are boys and girls too, who may keep bad company with impunity; but such happy strength of mind, and still happier purity of nature, are, to say the least of the matter, by no means universal possessions. Our author, moreover, seems to speak rather inconsistently. He admits that romances 'may instruct the youthful mind by real pictures of life, and awaken our better feelings and sympathies by strains of generous sentiment.' But if they may be thus powerful for good, we fear it follows, as an unavoidable consequence, that they may be equally powerful for evil. And again he tells us, that 'the vices and follies of Tom Jones, are those which the world soon teaches to all who enter on the career of life, and to which society is unhappily too indulgent.' But he has not told us that such novels as Tom Jones are read by many long before they enter *the career of life*, anticipating, and, with fatal skill, paving the way for its lessons of licentiousness; nor

take offence; and we can only say, that they may be termed rather jocularly coarse than seductive; and that they are atoned for by the admirable mixture of wit and argument, by which, in others, the cause of true religion and virtue is supported and advanced.

Fielding considered his works as an experiment in British literature; and, therefore, he chose to prefix a preliminary Chapter to each Book, explanatory of his own views, and of the rules attached to this mode of composition. Those critical introductions, which rather interrupt the course of the story, and the flow of the interest at the first perusal, are found, on a second or third, the most entertaining chapters of the whole work.

The publication of *Tom Jones* carried Fielding's fame to its height; but seems to have been attended with no consequences to his fortune, beyond the temporary relief which the copy-money afforded him. It was after this period, that he published his proposal for making an effectual Provision for the Poor, formerly noticed, and a pamphlet relating to the mysterious case of the celebrated Elizabeth Canning, in which he adopted the cause of common

has he made any estimate of the extent to which the overindulgence of society, in regard to certain classes of vice, may be the effect of an immoral literature, operating, through a long course of years, on the individual minds of which society is composed. And when he '*excludes from consideration* those infamous works which address themselves directly to awakening the grosser passions,' we suspect he excludes a class of books by no means so generally injurious, as those which insinuate cunning doses of such stimulants, amidst materials which the wisest must admire, and the gravest cannot condemn."—*Quarterly Review*, Sept. 1826.]

sense against popular prejudice, and failed in consequence in the object of his publication.

Amelia was the author's last work of importance. It may be termed a continuation of *Tom Jones;* but we have not the same sympathy for the ungrateful and dissolute conduct of Booth, which we yield to the youthful follies of Jones. The character of Amelia is said to have been drawn for Fielding's second wife. If he put her patience, as has been alleged, to tests of the same kind, he has, in some degree, repaid her, by the picture he has drawn of her feminine delicacy and pure tenderness.[1] Fielding's Novels show few instances of pathos; it was, perhaps, inconsistent with the life which he was compelled to lead; for those who see most of human misery become necessarily, in some degree, hardened to its effects. But few scenes of fictitious distress are more affecting, than that in which Amelia is described as having made her little preparations for the evening, and sitting in anxious expectation of the return of her unworthy husband, whose folly is, in the meantime, preparing for her

[1] [" H. Fielding has given a true picture of himself and his first wife, in the characters of Mr and Mrs Booth, some compliments to his own figure excepted; and I am persuaded, several of the incidents he mentions are real matters of fact. I wonder he does not perceive Tom Jones and Mr Booth are sorry scoundrels. All this sort of books have the same fault, which I cannot easily pardon, being very mischievous. They place a merit in extravagant passions, and encourage young people to hope for impossible events, to draw them out of the misery they choose to plunge themselves into, expecting legacies from unknown relatives, and generous benefactors to distressed virtue, as much out of nature as fairy treasures."—LADY M. W. MONTAGU—*Works*, vol. iv., p. 259-60.]

new scenes of misery. But our sympathy for the wife is disturbed by our dislike of her unthankful helpmate, of whose conversion we have no hope, and with whose errors we have no sympathy. The tale is, therefore, on the whole, unpleasing, even though relieved by the humours of the doughty Colonel Bath, and the learned Dr Harrison, characters drawn with such force and precision, as Fielding alone knew how to employ.

Millar published *Amelia* in 1751. He had paid a thousand pounds for the copyright; and when he began to suspect that the work would be judged inferior to its predecessor, he employed the following stratagem to push it upon the trade. At a sale made to the booksellers, previous to the publication, Millar offered his friends his other publications on the usual terms of discount; but when he came to *Amelia*, he laid it aside, as a work expected to be in such demand, that he could not afford to deliver it to the trade in the usual manner. The *ruse* succeeded—the impression was anxiously bought up, and the bookseller relieved from every apprehension of a slow sale.[1]

Notwithstanding former failures, Fielding, in 1752, commenced a new attempt at a literary newspaper and review, which he entitled the

[1] ["Johnson," says Boswell, "read Fielding's *Amelia* through without stopping."—"He appears," says Malone, "to have been particularly pleased with the character of the heroine of this novel, and said, Fielding's Amelia was the most pleasing heroine of all the romances, but that vile broken nose never cured, ruined the sale of perhaps the only book, of which, being *published* betimes one morning, a new edition was called for before night."—*Anecdotes*, p 221.]

Covent-Garden Journal, to be published twice a-week, and conducted by Sir Alexander Drawcansir. It was the author's failing, that he could not continue any plan of this nature, (for which otherwise his ready pen, sharp wit, and classical knowledge, so highly fitted him,) without involving himself in some of the party squabbles, or petty literary broils, of the day. On the present occasion, it was not long ere he involved himself in a quarrel with Dr Hill,[1] and other periodical writers. Among the latter, we are sorry to particularize Smollett, although possessed of the most kindred genius to Fielding's which has yet appeared in British literature. The warfare was of brief duration, and neither party would obtain honour by an enquiry into the cause or conduct of its hostilities.

Meanwhile, Fielding's life was fast decaying; a complication of diseases had terminated in a dropsical habit, which totally undermined his strong constitution. The Duke of Newcastle, then prime minister, was desirous of receiving assistance from him in the formation of a plan, for the remedy and prevention of secret robberies, and improving the police of the metropolis. For the small consideration of L.600, paid by government, Fielding engaged to extirpate several gangs of daring ruffians, which at this time infested London, and its vicinity; and though his health was reduced to the last extremity, he continued himself to superintend the conduct of his agents, to take evidence, and make commitments, until this great object was attained.

[1] [See the particulars of this warfare in D'Israeli's Quarrels of Authors, vol. ii., p. 99.]

These last exertions seem to have been fatal to his exhausted frame, which suffered at once under dropsy, and jaundice, and asthma. The Bath waters were tried in vain, and various modes of cure or alleviation were resorted to, of which tapping only appears to have succeeded to a certain extent. The medical attendants gave their last sad advice in recommending a milder climate. Of his departure for Lisbon, in conformity with their opinion, he has himself left the following melancholy record, painting the man and his situation a thousand times better than any other pen could achieve.

"On this day, Wednesday, June 26, 1754,"[1] he says, "the most melancholy sun I had ever beheld arose, and found me awake at my house at Fordhook. By the light of this sun, I was, in my own opinion, last to behold and take leave of some of those creatures on whom I doated with a mother-like fondness, guided by nature and passion, and uncured and unhardened by all the doctrine of that philosophical school, where I had learned to bear pains, and to despise death. In this situation, as I could not conquer nature, I submitted entirely to her, and she made as great a fool of me, as she had ever done of any woman whatsoever; under pretence of giving me leave to enjoy, she drew me in to suffer, the company of my little ones, during eight hours; and I doubt not whether, in that time, I did not undergo more than in all my distemper. At twelve precisely my coach was at the door, which was no sooner told me, than I kissed my children round, and went into it with some little resolution. My wife, who behaved more like a heroine and philosopher, though at the same time the tenderest mother in the world, and my eldest daughter, followed me. Some friends went with us, and others here took their leave; and I heard my behaviour applauded, with many murmurs and praises, to which I well knew I had no title."

This affecting passage makes a part of his *Journey to Lisbon*, a work which he commenced during

[1] Voyage to Lisbon.

the voyage, with a hand trembling in almost its latest hour. It remains a singular example of Fielding's natural strength of mind, that while struggling hard at once with the depression and with the irritability of disease, he could still exhibit a few flashes of that bright wit, which once set the "world" in a roar. His perception of character, and power of describing it, had not forsaken him in those sad moments; for the master of the ship in which he sailed, the scolding landlady of the Isle of Wight, the military coxcomb who visits their vessel, are all portraits, marked with the master-hand which traced Parson Adams and Squire Western.

The *Journey to Lisbon* was abridged by fate. Fielding reached that city, indeed, alive, and remained there two months; but he was unable to continue his proposed literary labours. The hand of death was upon him, and seized upon its prey in the beginning of October, 1754. He died in the forty-eighth year of his life, leaving behind him a widow, and four children, one of whom died soon afterwards. His brother, Sir John Fielding, well known as a magistrate, aided by the bounty of Mr Allen, made suitable provision for the survivors; but of their fate we are ignorant.

Thus lived, and thus died, at a period of life when the world might have expected continued delight from his matured powers, the celebrated Henry Fielding, father of the English Novel; and in his powers of strong and national humour, and forcible yet natural exhibition of character, unap-

proached as yet, even by his most successful followers.[1]

Abbotsford, October 25, 1820.

[1] [" Fielding, the *prose* Homer of human nature."—**Byron** *Life*, vol. v., p. 55.]

TOBIAS SMOLLETT.

The Life of Smollett, whose genius has raised an imperishable monument to his fame, has been written, with spirit and elegance, by his friend and contemporary, the celebrated Dr Moore, and more lately by Dr Robert Anderson of Edinburgh, with a careful research, which leaves to us little except the task of selection and abridgement.

Our author was descended from an ancient and honourable family; an advantage to which, from various passages in his writings, he seems to have attached considerable weight, and the consciousness of which seems to have contributed its share in forming some of the peculiarities of his character.

Sir James Smollett of Bonhill, the grandfather of the celebrated author, was bred to the bar, became one of the Commissaries (*i. e.* Consistorial Judges) of Edinburgh, represented the burgh of Dumbarton in the Scottish Parliament, and lent his aid to dissolve that representative body for ever, being one of the Commissioners for framing the Union with England. By his lady, a daughter of Sir Aulay MacAulay of Ardincaple, Sir James Smollett had four sons, of whom Archibald, the youngest, was father of the poet.

It appears that Archibald Smollett followed no profession, and that, without his father's consent,

he married an amiable woman, Barbara, daughter of Mr Cunningham of Gilbertfield. The disunion betwixt the son and father, to which this act of imprudence gave rise, did not prevent Sir James Smollett from assigning to him, for his support, the house and farm of Dalquhurn, near his own mansion of Bonhill. Archibald Smollett died early, leaving two sons and a daughter wholly dependent on the kindness of his grandfather. The eldest son embraced the military life, and perished by the shipwreck of a transport. The daughter, Jane, married Mr Telfer of Leadhills, and her descendant, Captain John Smollett, R.N., now represents the family, and possesses the estate of Bonhill. The second son of Archibald Smollett is the subject of this Memoir.

TOBIAS SMOLLETT (baptized Tobias George) was born in 1721, in the old house of Dalquhurn, in the valley of Leven, in perhaps the most beautiful district in Britain. Its distinguished native has celebrated the vale of Leven, not only in the beautiful Ode addressed to his parent stream, but in the *Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, where he mentions the home of his forefathers in the following enthusiastic, yet not exaggerated terms:—

"A very little above the source of the Leven, on the lake, stands the house of Cameron, belonging to Mr Smollett,[1] so embosomed in an oak wood, that we did not see it till we were within fifty yards of the door. The lake approaches on one side to within six or seven yards of the window. It might have been placed in a higher situation, which would have afforded a more extensive prospect, and a drier atmosphere; but this imperfection is not chargeable on the present proprietor, who purchased it ready built, rather than be at the

[1] The late Commissary Smollett.

trouble of repairing his own family-house of Bonhill, which stands two miles from hence on the Leven, so surrounded with plantations, that it used to be known by the name of the Mavis (or thrush) Nest. Above that house is a romantic glen, or cleft of a mountain, covered with hanging woods, having at bottom a stream of fine water that forms a number of cascades in its descent to join the Leven, so that the scene is quite enchanting.

"I have seen the Lago di Gardi, Albano de Vico, Bolsena, and Geneva, and I prefer Loch-Lomond to them all; a preference which is certainly owing to the verdant islands that seem to float upon its surface, affording the most enchanting objects of repose to the excursive view. Nor are the banks destitute of beauties which even partake of the sublime. On this side they display a sweet variety of woodland, corn-fields, and pasture, with several agreeable villas, emerging, as it were, out of the lake; till at some distance, the prospect terminates in huge mountains, covered with heath, which, being in the bloom, affords a very rich covering of purple. Every thing here is romantic beyond imagination. This country is justly styled the Arcadia of Scotland: I do not doubt but it may vie with Arcadia in every thing but climate. I am sure it excels it in verdure, wood, and water."

A poet bred up amongst such scenes, must become doubly attached to his art; and accordingly it appears that Smollett was in the highest degree sensible of the beauties of nature, although his fame has chiefly risen upon his power of delineating human character. He obtained the rudiments of classical knowledge at the Dumbarton grammar-school, then taught by Mr John Love, the scarce less learned antagonist of the learned Ruddiman. From thence he removed to Glasgow, where he pursued his studies with diligence and success, and was finally bound apprentice to Mr John Gordon, an eminent surgeon. This destination was contrary to young Smollett's wishes, which strongly determined him to a military life; and he is supposed

to have avenged himself both of his grandfather, who contradicted his inclinations, and of his master, by describing the former under the unamiable character of the old Judge, and the latter as Mr Potion, the first master of *Roderick Random*. At a later period he did Mr Gordon justice by mentioning him in the following terms:—"I was introduced to Mr Gordon," says Matthew Bramble, "a patriot of a truly noble spirit, who is father of the linen manufactory in that place, and was the great promoter of the city work-house, infirmary, and other works of public utility. Had he lived in ancient Rome, he would have been honoured with a statue at the public expense."

During his apprenticeship, Smollett's conduct indicated that love of frolic, practical jest, and playful mischief, of which his works show many proofs, and the young novelist gave also several indications of his talents and propensity to satire.[1]

1 ["Although, at so early a period of life, he was liable to very great mistakes in judging of the characters of mankind, yet he began to direct the edge of his boyish satire against such scanty shoots of affectation and ridicule as were produced in a city enriched by commerce, and enlightened by its university. The shafts of his wit were not even then confined to the coquetry and foppery of the youthful and fashionable only, but were sometimes aimed at the selfishness and hypocrisy of the more formal and serious part of the citizens, among whom the chief means of acquiring importance were the possession of wealth, and the decent observance of the duties of religion.

"These early productions of his muse afforded much entertainment to his young companions, but they gave offence to many pious and industrious persons, who were unjustly accused of being hypocrites, and exposed to his satire. Some of them, it is said, possessed a considerable portion of that species of humour for which he was afterwards so much dis-

It is said, that his master expressed his conviction of Smollett's future eminence in very homely but expressive terms, when some of his neighbours were boasting the superior decorum and propriety of their young pupils. "It may be all very true," said the keensighted Mr Gordon; "but give me, before them all, my own bubbly-nosed callant, with the stane in his pouch." Without attempting to render this into English, our Southern readers must be informed, that the words contain a faithful sketch of a negligent, unlucky, but spirited urchin, never without some mischievous prank in his head, and a stone in his pocket ready to execute it.[1]

In the eighteenth year of Smollett's life, his

tinguished. None of them, however, have been thought worthy of preservation."—ANDERSON'S *Life of Smollett*, p. 14.]

[1] ["On a winter evening," says Dr Moore, "when the streets were covered with snow, Smollett happened to be engaged in a snow-ball fight with a few boys of his own age. Among his associates was the apprentice of that surgeon who is supposed to have been delineated under the name of Crab in *Roderick Random*. He entered his shop while his apprentice was in the heat of the engagement. On the return of the latter, the master remonstrated severely with him for his negligence in quitting the shop. The youth excused himself by saying that while he was employed in making up a prescription, a fellow had hit him with a snowball; and he had been in pursuit of the delinquent. 'A mighty probable story truly,' said the master, in an ironical tone; 'I wonder how long I should stand here,' added he, 'before it would enter into any mortal's head to throw a snowball at me.' While he was holding his head erect, with a most scornful air, he received a very severe blow in the face by a snowball. Smollet, who stood concealed behind the pillar at the shop-door, had heard the dialogue; and perceiving that his companion was puzzled for an answer, he extricated him by a repartee equally smart and *à propos*."—*Life of Smollett*.]

grandfather, Sir James, died, making no provision by his will for the children of his youngest son, a neglect which, joined to other circumstances already mentioned, procured him from his irritable descendant the painful distinction which the old Judge holds in the narrative of *Roderick Random.*

Without efficient patronage of any kind, Smollett, in his nineteenth year, went to London to seek his fortune wherever he might find it. He carried with him the *Regicide*, a tragedy, written during the progress of his studies, but which, though it evinces in particular passages the genius of the author, cannot be termed with justice a performance suited for the stage. Lord Lyttleton, as a patron—Garrick and Lacy, as managers,—gave the youthful author some encouragement, which, perhaps, the sanguine temper of Smollett overrated; for, in the story of Mr Melopoyn, where he gives the history of his attempts to bring the *Regicide* on the stage, the patron and the manager are not spared; and, in *Peregrine Pickle*, the personage of Gosling Scrag, which occurs in the first edition only, is meant to represent Lord Lyttleton The story is more briefly told in the preface to the first edition of the *Regicide*, where the author informs us that his tragedy

"was taken into the protection of one of those little fellows who are sometimes called great men, and, like other orphans, neglected accordingly. Stung with resentment," he adds, "which I mistook for contempt, I resolved to punish this barbarous indifference, and actually discarded my patron; consoling myself with the barren praises of a few associates, who, in the most indefatigable manner, employed their time and influence in collecting from all quarters observations on

my piece, which, in consequence of those suggestions, put on a new appearance almost every day, until my occasions called me out of the kingdom."

Disappointed in the hopes he had founded on in his theatrical attempt, Smollett accepted the situation of surgeon's mate on board of a ship of the line, in the expedition to Carthagena, in 1741, of which he published a short account in *Roderick Random*, and a longer narrative in a *Compendium of Voyages*, published in 1751. But the term of our author's service in the navy was chiefly remarkable from his having acquired, in that brief space, such intimate knowledge of our nautical world, as enabled him to describe sailors with such truth and spirit of delineation, that from that time whoever has undertaken the same task has seemed to copy more from Smollett than from nature. Our author quitted the navy, in disgust alike with the drudgery, and with the despotic discipline, which in those days was qualified by no urbanity on the part of superior officers, and which exposed subordinates in the service to such mortifications, as a haughty spirit like that of Smollett could very ill endure. He left the service in the West Indies, and after a residence of some time in the island of Jamaica, returned to England in 1746. Obscure traces of the vexatious persecutions which he underwent during his service in the navy, may be found in *Roderick Random;* but the temper of the author was too irritable to encourage our full confidence in the truth of his satire.

It was at this time, when, incensed at the brutal severities exercised by the government's troops in

the Highlands, to which romantic regions he was a neighbour by birth, Smollett wrote the pathetic spirited, and patriotic verses entitled *The Tears of Caledonia.* The late Robert Graham, Esq. of Gartmore, a particular friend and trustee of Smollett, has recorded the manner in which this effusion was poured forth.

"Some gentlemen having met at a tavern were amusing themselves before supper with a game at cards; while Smollett, not choosing to play, sat down to write. One of the company, who also was nominated by him one of his trustees," (Gartmore himself,) "observing his earnestness, and supposing he was writing verses, asked him if it was not so. He accordingly read them the first sketch of his *Tears of Scotland*, consisting only of six stanzas; and on their remarking that the termination of the poem, being too strongly expressed, might give offence to persons whose political opinions were different, he sat down, without reply, and, with an air of great indignation, subjoined the concluding stanza:—

"While the warm blood bedews my veins,
And unimpair'd remembrance reigns,
Resentment of my Country's fate
Within my filial breast shall beat.
Yes, spite of thine insulting foe,
My sympathizing verse shall flow.
Mourn, hapless Caledonia, mourn,
Thy banish'd peace, thy laurels torn!"

To estimate the generous emotions with which Smollett was actuated on this occasion, it must be remarked that his patriotism was independent of party feeling, as he had been bred up in Whig principles, which were those of his family; and although these appear from his historical work to have been in some degree modified, yet the author continued attached to the principles of the Revolution. It is also to be remembered, that at the extinction of a civil war, the least appearance of

sympathy with the vanquished party is sure to interrupt fairer prospects of preferment than any which opened to Smollett. His feelings for his country's distresses, and his resentment of the injuries she sustained, were as genuine and disinterested as the mode of expressing them is pathetic and spirited.

Smollett, on his return from the West Indies, settled in London, and commenced his career as a professional man. He was not successful as a physician, probably because his independent and haughty spirit neglected the by-paths which lead to fame in that profession. One account says, that he failed to render himself agreeable to his female patients, certainly not from want of address or figure, for both were remarkably pleasing, but more probably by a hasty impatience of listening to petty complaints, and a want of sympathy with the lamentations of those who laboured under no real indisposition. It is remarkable, that although very many, perhaps the greatest number of successful medical men, have assumed a despotic authority over their patients after their character was established, few or none have risen to preeminence in practice who used the same want of ceremony in the commencement of their career. Perhaps, however, Dr Smollett was too soon discouraged, and abandoned prematurely a profession in which success is proverbially slow.

Smollett, who must have felt his own powers, had naturally recourse to his pen, to supply the deficiencies of an income which his practice did not afford; and besides repeated attempts to get his

tragedy acted, he sent forth, in 1746, *Advice*, and in 1747, *Reproof*, both poetical satires possessed of considerable merit, but which only influenced the fate of the author, as they increased the number of his personal enemies. Rich, the manager, was particularly satirized in *Reproof*. Smollett had written for the Covent-Garden theatre an opera called *Alceste*, which was not acted in consequence of some quarrel betwixt the author and manager, which Smollett thus avenged.

About 1747, Smollett was married to Miss Lascelles, a beautiful and accomplished woman, to whom he had become attached in the West Indies. Instead of an expected fortune of L.3000, he gained by this connexion only a lawsuit, and increased the expense of housekeeping, which he was still less able to afford, and was again obliged to have recourse to his literary talents.

Necessity is the mother of invention in literature as well as in the arts, and the necessity of Smollett brought him forth in his preeminent character of a Novelist. *Roderick Random* may be considered as an imitation of Le Sage, as the hero flits through almost every scene of public and private life, recording, as he paints his own adventures, the manners of the times, with all their various shades and diversities of colouring; but forming no connected plot or story, the several parts of which hold connexion with, or bear proportion to, each other. It was the second example of the minor-romance, or English novel. Fielding had shortly before set the example in his *Tom Jones*, and a rival of almost equal eminence, in 1748, brought forth the *Adven-*

tures of Roderick Random; a work which was eagerly received by the public, and brought both reputation and profit to the author.

It was generally believed that Smollett painted some of his own early adventures under the veil of fiction; but the public carried the spirit of applying the characters of a work of fiction to living personages much farther perhaps than the author intended. Gawkey, Crabbe, and Potion,[1] were assigned to individuals in the West of Scotland; Mrs Smollett was supposed to be Narcissa; the author himself represented Roderick Random (of which there can be little doubt); a bookbinder and barber, the early acquaintances of Smollett, contended for the character of the attached, amiable, simple-hearted Strap;[2] and the two naval officers, under whom

[1] [" Gordon is generally said to have been the original of Potion in *Roderick Random.* This has been denied by Smollett's biographers; but their conjecture is of no more weight than the tradition which it contradicts. In the characters of a work so compounded of truth and fiction, the author alone could have estimated the personality which he intended, and of that intention he was not probably communicative. The tradition still remaining at Glasgow is, that Smollett was a restive apprentice, and a mischievous stripling. While at the University he cultivated the study of literature, as well as that of medicine, and showed a disposition for poetry, but very often in that bitter vein of satire which he carried so plentifully into the temper of his future years."—CAMPBELL.]

[2] [" Mr Lewis, of Chelsea, who died in 1783, used to bind books for, and enjoy the company and conversation of the first literary men of his day; and was generally supposed to have been the original of *Strap,* in *Roderick Random.* Mrs Lewis often assured the writer of this article, that her husband denied the assertions of many people, as often as it was mentioned to him; but there is every reason to suppose him to have been the person that Smollett had in view, as they came

Smollett had served, were stigmatized under the names of Oakum and Whiffle. Certain it is, that the contempt with which his unfortunate play had been treated forms the basis of Mr Melopoyn's story, in which Garrick and Lyttleton are roughly treated under the characters of Marmozet and Sheerwit. The public did not taste less keenly the real merits of this interesting and humorous work, because they conceived it to possess the zest arising from personal allusion; and the sale of the work exceeded greatly the expectations of all concerned.

Having now the ear of the public, Smollett published, by subscription, his unfortunate tragedy, the *Regicide*, in order to shame those who had barred his access to the stage. The preface is filled with complaints, which are neither just nor manly, and with strictures upon Garrick and Lyttleton, which amount almost to abuse. The merits of the piece by no means vindicate this extreme resentment on the part of the author, and of this Smollett himself became at length sensible. He was impetuous, but not sullen in his resentment, and generously allowed, in his *History of England*, the full merit to those, whom, in the first impulse of passion and disappointment, he had treated with injustice.[1]

out of Scotland together, and, when Smollett lived at Chelsea, Mr Lewis used to dine every Sunday with him."—NICHOLS' *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iii., p. 465.]

[1] Desirous "of doing justice in a work of truth for wrongs done in a work of fiction," (to use his own expression,) in giving a sketch of the liberal arts in his *History of England*, he remarked, "the exhibitions of the stage were improved to the most exquisite entertainment by the talents and management

In 1750, Smollett made a tour to Paris, where he gleaned materials for future works of fiction, besides enlarging his acquaintance with life and manners. A coxcomb painter, whom he met on this occasion, formed the original of the exquisite

of Garrick, who greatly surpassed all his predecessors of this, and perhaps every other nation, in his genius for acting, in the sweetness and variety of his tones, the irresistible magic of his eye, the fire and vivacity of his action, the elegance of attitude, and the whole pathos of expression.

"Candidates for literary fame appeared even in the higher sphere of life, embellished by the nervous sense and extensive erudition of a Corke, by the delicate taste, the polished muse, and tender feelings of a Lyttleton."

Not satisfied with this *public* declaration of his sentiments, he wrote in still stronger terms to Mr Garrick:

"DEAR SIR, *Chelsea, Jan.* 27, 1762.

"I this morning received your *Winter's Tale*, and am agreeably flattered by this mark of your attention. What I have said of Mr Garrick in the *History of England*, was, I protest, the language of my heart. I shall rejoice if he thinks I have done him barely justice. I am sure the public will think I have done him no more than justice. In giving a short sketch of the liberal arts, I could not, with any propriety, forbear mentioning a gentleman so eminently distinguished by a genius that has no rival. Besides, I thought it was a duty incumbent on me in particular, to make a public atonement in a work of truth for wrongs done him in a work of fiction.

"Among the other inconveniences arising from ill health, I deeply regret my being disabled from a personal cultivation of your good-will, and the unspeakable enjoyment I should sometimes derive from your private conversation, as well as from the public exertion of your talents; but sequestered as I am from the world of entertainment, the consciousness of standing well in your opinion will ever afford singular satisfaction to,

"Dear Sir,
"Your very humble Servant,
"T. SMOLLETT."

Pallet; while Dr Akenside, a man of a very different character, was marked the future prey of satire as the pedantic Doctor of Medicine. He is said to have offended Smollett by some national reflections on Scotland,[1] while his extravagant zeal for liberty, which was in no great danger, and his pedantic and exclusive admiration of the manners of classical antiquity, afforded, as Smollett has drawn them, an ample fund of ridicule.

Peregrine Pickle is supposed to have been written chiefly in Paris, and appeared in 1751. It was received by the public with uncommon avidity, and a large impression dispersed, notwithstanding the efforts of certain booksellers and others, whom Smollett accuses of attempts to obstruct the sale, the book being published on account of the author himself. His irritable temper induced him to run hastily before the public with complaints, which, howsoever well or ill-grounded, the public has been at all times accustomed to hear with great indifference. Many professional authors, philosophers, and other public characters of the time, were also satirized with little restraint.

The splendid merits of the work itself were a much greater victory over the author's enemies, if he really had such, than any which he could gain by personal altercation with unworthy opponents. Yet by many his second novel was not thought quite equal to his first. In truth, there occurs betwixt *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle* a difference, which is often observed betwixt the first

[1] [Akenside had studied his profession at Edinburgh.]

and second efforts of authors who have been successful in this line. *Peregrine Pickle* is more finished, more sedulously laboured into excellence, exhibits scenes of more accumulated interest, and presents a richer variety of character and adventure, than *Roderick Random;* but yet there is an ease and simplicity in the first novel which is not quite attained in the second, where the author has substituted splendid colouring for strict fidelity of outline. Thus, of the inimitable sea-characters, Trunnion, Pipes, and even Hatchway, border upon caricature; but Lieutenant Bowling and Jack Rattlin are truth and nature itself. The reason seems to be, that when an author brings forth his first representation of any class of characters, he seizes on the leading and striking outlines, and therefore, in the second attempt of the same kind, he is forced to make some distinction, and either to invest his personage with less obvious and ordinary traits of character, or to place him in a new and less natural light. Hence, it would seem, the difference in opinion which sometimes occurs betwixt the author and the reader, respecting the comparative value of early and of subsequent publications. The author naturally esteems that most upon which he is conscious much more labour has been bestowed, while the public often remain constant to their first love, and prefer the facility and truth of the earlier work to the more elaborate execution displayed in those which follow it. But though the simplicity of its predecessor was not, and could not be, repeated in Smollett's second novel, his powers are so far from evincing any falling off, that in *Peregrine Pickle*

there is a much wider range of character and incident, than is exhibited in *Roderick Random*, as well as a more rich and brilliant display of the talents and humour of the distinguished author.

Peregrine Pickle did not, however, owe its success entirely to its intrinsic merit. The *Memoirs of a Lady of Quality*, a separate tale, thrust into the work, with which it has no sort of connexion, in the manner introduced by Cervantes, and followed by Le Sage and Fielding, added considerably to its immediate popularity. These Memoirs, which are now regarded as a tiresome and unnecessary excrescence upon the main story, contain the history of Lady Vane, renowned at that time for her beauty and her intrigues.[1] The lady not only furnished Smollett with the materials for recording her own infamy, but, it is said, rewarded him handsomely for the insertion of her story. Mr MacKercher, a character of a different description, was also introduced. He was remarkable for the benevolent Quixotry with which he supported the pretensions of the unfortunate Mr Annesley, a claimant of the title and property of Anglesea. The public took the interest in the frailties of Lady Vane, and the benevolence of Mr MacKercher, which they always take in the history of

[1] Lady Vane was the daughter of Francis Hawes, Esq., of Purley-Hall, near Reading, in Berkshire, one of the South-Sea Directors in 1720, and married, about the beginning of 1732, at the age of seventeen, to Lord William Hamilton, who dying July 11, 1734, she married, May 19, 1735, Lord Viscount Vane, of the kingdom of Ireland, with whom she had various scandalous lawsuits, and died in London, March 31, 1788, in the seventy-second year of her life.

living and remarkable characters; and the anecdotes respecting the demirep and the man of charity, greatly promoted the instant popularity of *Peregrine Pickle*.

The extreme license of some of the scenes described in this novel, gave deep offence to the thinking part of the public; and the work, in conformity to their just complaints, was much altered in the second edition. The preliminary advertisement has these words:—

"It was the author's duty, as well as his interest, to oblige the public with this edition, which he has endeavoured to render less unworthy of their acceptance, by retrenching the superfluities of the first, reforming its manners, and correcting its expression. Divers uninteresting incidents are wholly suppressed; some humorous scenes he has endeavoured to heighten; and he flatters himself that he has expunged every adventure, phrase, and insinuation, that could be construed by the most delicate reader into a trespass upon the rules of decorum.

"He owns with contrition, that, in one or two instances, he gave way too much to the suggestions of personal resentment, and represented characters, as they appeared to him at the time, through the exaggerated medium of prejudice. But he has in this impression endeavoured to make atonement for these extravagances. Howsoever he may have erred in point of judgment or discretion, he defies the whole world to prove that he was ever guilty of one act of malice, ingratitude, or dishonour. This declaration he may be permitted to make, without incurring the imputation of vanity or presumption, considering the numerous shafts of envy, rancour, and revenge, that have lately, both in public and private, been levelled at his reputation."

In reference to this palinode, we may barely observe, that the passages retrenched in the second edition are, generally speaking, details of frolics in which the author had permitted his turn for humour

greatly to outrun his sense of decency and propriety; and, in this respect, notwithstanding what he himself says in the passage just quoted, the work would have been much improved by a more unsparing application of the pruning knife. Several personal reflections were also omitted, particularly those on Lyttleton and Fielding, whom he had upbraided for his dependence on that statesman's patronage.[1]

[1] Lyttleton's celebrated Monody on the Death of his Wife, was ridiculed by a burlesque Ode on the death of my Grandmother, of which the following may be a sufficient specimen:

> "Where wast thou, wittol Ward, when hapless fate
> From these weak arms mine aged granam tore;
> These pious arms assay'd too late
> To drive the dismal phantom from the door.
> Could not thy healing drop, illustrious quack,
> Could not thy salutary pill prolong her days,
> For whom, so oft, to Marybone, alack!
> Thy sorrels dragg'd thee through the worst of ways?"
> &c. &c.

Neither is Smollett more respectful to Lyttleton in his personal character than to his poetical talent. He describes him as "the famous Gosling Scrag, Esq., son and heir of Sir Marmaduke Scrag, who seats himself in the chair of judgment, and gives sentence upon the authors of the age. I should be glad to know upon what pretensions to genius this predominance is founded? Do a few flimsy odes, barren epistles, pointless epigrams, and the superstitious suggestions of a half-witted enthusiast, entitle him to that eminent rank he maintains in the world of letters? or did he acquire the reputation of a wit, by a repetition of trite invectives against a minister, conveyed in a theatrical cadence, accompanied with the most ridiculous gestures, before he believed it was his interest to desert his master, and renounce his party? For my own part, I never perused any of his performances, I never saw him open his mouth in public, I never heard him speak in private conversation, without recollecting and applying these two lines in Pope's Dunciad—

Dr Anderson informs us, that, "at this period, Smollett seems to have obtained the degree of Doctor of Physic, probably from a foreign University, and announced himself a candidate for fame and fortune as a physician, by a publication entitled, 'An Essay on the External Use of Water, in a Letter to Dr ——, with particular Remarks upon the present Method of using the Mineral Waters at Bath in Somersetshire, and a plan for rendering them more safe, agreeable, and efficacious; 4to, 1752.'[1] The performance advanced his reputation as a man of science and taste, but failed to conduct the physician to professional eminence and wealth. This is the only publication in the line of his profession which is known to have proceeded from his pen." If the Essay was intended to serve as

'Dulness, delighted, eyed the lively dunce,
Remembering she herself was pertness once.'"

Lord Lyttleton's patronage of Fielding is thus contemptuously noticed, in a recommendation to a young author to feed the vanity of Gosling Scrag, Esq.: "I advise Mr Spondy to give him the refusal of this same pastoral; and who knows but he may have the good fortune of being listed in the number of his beef-eaters, in which case he may, in process of time, be provided for in the Customs or Church: and when he is inclined to marry his own cook-maid, his gracious patron may condescend to give the bride away; and may finally settle him in his old age as a trading Westminster Justice."—*Peregrine Pickle*. Edit. 1751, vol. iv., p. 123.

[1] [The late ingenious artist, Mr H. W. Williams of Edinburgh, tells us, in his Travels, that a friend of his had seen, in 1816, at Leghorn, the diploma of Smollett's doctorate, and that it was an Aberdeen one. The present Editor thought it worth while to enquire into this, and Professor Cruikshanks has politely forwarded a certificated copy of the diploma, which was granted by the Marischal College of Aberdeen in June, 1750.]

an introduction to practice, it was totally unsuccessful. Perhaps Smollett's character as a satirist, and the readiness he had shown to ingraft the peculiarities and history of individuals into works of fiction, were serious obstacles to him in a profession which demands so much confidence as that of a family physician. But it is probable that the author's chief object in the publication was to assist the cause of a particular friend, Mr Cleland, a surgeon at Bath, then engaged in a controversy concerning the use of these celebrated waters.

In the year 1753, Dr Smollett published *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*, one of those works which seem to have been written for the purpose of showing how far humour and genius can go, in painting a complete picture of human depravity. Smollett has made his own defence for the loathsome task which he has undertaken.

"Let me not," says he, in the dedication, "be condemned for having chosen my principal character from the purlieus of treachery and fraud, when I declare my purpose is to set him up as a beacon for the benefit of the inexperienced and unwary, who, from the perusal of these memoirs, may learn to avoid the manifold snares with which they are continually surrounded in the paths of life, while those who hesitate on the brink of iniquity may be terrified from plunging into that irremediable gulf, by surveying the deplorable fate of Ferdinand Count Fathom."

But, while we do justice to the author's motives, we are obliged to deny the validity of his reasoning. To a reader of a good disposition and well-regulated mind, the picture of moral depravity presented in the character of Count Fathom is a disgusting pollution of the imagination. To those, on the other hand, who hesitate on the brink of meditated

iniquity, it is not safe to detail the arts by which the ingenuity of villany has triumphed in former instances; and it is well known that the publication of the real account of uncommon crimes, although attended by the public and infamous punishment of the perpetrators, has often had the effect of stimulating others to similar actions. To some unhappy minds, it may occur as a sort of extenuation of the crime which they meditate, that even if they carry their purpose into execution, their guilt will fall far short of what the author has ascribed to his fictitious character; and there are other imaginations so ill regulated, that they catch infection from stories of wickedness, and feel an insane impulse to emulate and to realize the pictures of villany, which are embodied in such narratives as those of *Zeluco* or *Count Fathom.*

Condemning, however, the plan and tendency of the work, it is impossible to deny our applause to the wonderful knowledge of life and manners, which is evinced in the tale of *Count Fathom*, as much as in any of Smollett's works. The horrible adventure in the hut of the robbers, is a tale of natural terror which rises into the sublime; and, though often imitated, has never yet been surpassed, or perhaps equalled. In *Count Fathom* also is to be found the first candid attempt to do justice to a calumniated race. The benevolent Jew of Cumberland had his prototype in the worthy Israelite, whom Smollett has introduced with very great effect into the history of *Fathom.*

Shortly after this publication, Smollett's warmth of temper involved him in an unpleasant embar-

rassment. A person, called Peter Gordon, after having been saved by Smollett's humanity from imprisonment and ruin, and after having prevailed upon him to interpose his credit in his behalf to an inconvenient extent, withdrew within the verge of the court, set his creditors at defiance, and treated his benefactor with so much personal insolence, that Smollett chastised him by a beating. A prosecution was commenced by Gordon, and his counsel, Mr Home Campbell, whether in indulgence of his natural rudeness and impetuosity, of which he had a great share, or whether moved by some special enmity against Smollett, opened the case with an unusual torrent of violence and misrepresentation. But the good sense and impartiality of the jury acquitted Smollett of the assault, and he was no sooner cleared of the charge than he sent an angry remonstrance to Mr Home Campbell, demanding that he should retract what he had said to his disadvantage. It does not appear how the affair was settled, but Smollett's manifesto, as a literary curiosity, is inserted in the Appendix to this Memoir.[1] Besides that this expostulation is too long for the occasion, and far too violent to be dignified, Smollett imputes to Campbell the improbable charge, that he was desirous to revenge himself upon the author of *Ferdinand Count Fathom*, because he had satirized the profession of the law. Lawyers are seldom very sensitive on this head, and if they were, they would have constant exercise for their irritability; since scarce a

[1] [See Appendix, No. I.]

satirical author, of whatsoever description, has concluded his work, without giving cause to the gentlemen of the robe for some such offence, as Smollett supposes Campbell to have taken in the present instance. The manifesto of Smollett contains, however, some just censure on the prevailing mode in which witnesses are treated in the courts of justice in England, who, far from being considered as persons brought there to speak the truth in a matter wherein they have no concern, and who are therefore entitled to civil treatment, and to the protection of the court, on the contrary are often regarded as men standing forward to perjure themselves, and are therefore condemned beforehand to a species of moral pillory, where they are pelted with all the foul jests which the wit of their interrogators can suggest.

Smollett's next task was a new version of *Don Quixote,* to which he was encouraged by a liberal subscription. The work was inscribed to Don Ricardo Wall, Principal Secretary of State to his Most Catholic Majesty, by whom the undertaking had been encouraged. Smollett's version of this admirable classic is thus elegantly compared with those of Motteux (or Ozell) and of Jarvis, by the late ingenious and amiable Lord Woodhouselee, in his "Essay on the Principles of Translation."

"Smollett inherited from nature a strong sense of ridicule, a great fund of original humour, and a happy versatility of talent, by which he could accommodate his style to almost every species of writing. He could adopt, alternately, the solemn, the lively, the sarcastic, the burlesque, and the vulgar. To these qualifications he joined an inventive genius, and a vigorous imagination. As he possessed talents equal to the

composition of original works of the same species with the romance of Cervantes, so it is not perhaps possible to conceive a writer more completely qualified to give a perfect translation of that novel.

"Motteux, with no great abilities as an original writer, appears to me to have been endowed with a strong perception of the ridiculous in human character, a just discernment of the weaknesses and follies of mankind. He seems likewise to have had a great command of the various styles which are accommodated to the expression both of grave burlesque, and of low humour. Inferior to Smollett in inventive genius, he seems to have equalled him in every quality which was essentially requisite to a translator of Don Quixote. It may, therefore, be supposed, that the contest between them will be nearly equal, and the question of preference very difficult to be decided. It would have been so, had Smollett confided in his own strength, and bestowed on his task that time and labour which the length and difficulty of the work required; but Smollett too often wrote in such circumstances, that despatch was his primary object. He found various English translations at hand, which he judged might save him the labour of a new composition. Jarvis could give him faithfully the sense of his author; and it was necessary only to polish his asperities, and lighten his heavy and awkward phraseology. To contend with Motteux, Smollett found it necessary to assume the armour of Jarvis. This author had purposely avoided, through the whole of his work, the smallest coincidence of expression with Motteux, whom, with equal presumption and injustice, he accuses in his preface of having 'taken his version wholly from the French.' We find, therefore, both in the translation of Jarvis, and that of Smollett, which is little else than an improved edition of the former, that there is a studied rejection of the phraseology of Motteux. Now, Motteux, though he has frequently assumed too great a license, both in adding to, and retrenching from the ideas of his original, has, upon the whole, a very high degree of merit as a translator. In the adoption of corresponding idioms, he has been eminently fortunate; and, as in these there is no great latitude, he has, in general, preoccupied the appropriate phrases; so that a succeeding translator, who proceeded on the rule of invariably rejecting his phraseology, must have, in general, altered for the worse. Such, I have said, was the rule laid down by Jarvis, and by his copyist and improver, Smollett, who, by thus

absurdly rejecting what his own judgment and taste must have approved, has produced a composition decidedly inferior, on the whole, to that of Motteux.

"Smollett was a good poet, and most of the verse translations, interspersed through this work, are executed with ability. It is on this head that Motteux has assumed to himself the greatest license. He has very presumptuously mutilated the poetry of Cervantes, by leaving out many entire stanzas from the larger compositions, and suppressing some of the smaller altogether. Yet the translation of those poems which he has retained is possessed of much poetical merit, and, in particular, those verses which are of a graver cast, are, in my opinion, superior to those of his rival.

"On the whole, I am inclined to think, the version of Motteux is by far the best we have yet seen of the romance of Cervantes, and that, if corrected in its licentious observations and enlargements, and in some other particulars, which I have noticed in the course of this comparison, we should have nothing to desire superior to it in the way of translation."

After the publication of *Don Quixote*, Smollett paid a visit to his native country,[1] in order to see his mother, who then resided at Scotston, in Peebles-shire, with her daughter and son-in law, Mr and Mrs Telfer. Dr Moore has given us the following beautiful anecdote respecting the meeting of the mother with her distinguished son.

"On Smollett's arrival, he was introduced to his mother, with the connivance of Mrs Telfer, as a gentleman from the West Indies, who was intimately acquainted with her son. The better to support his assumed character, he endeavoured to preserve a serious countenance, approaching to a frown; but, while his mother's eyes were riveted on his countenance, he could not refrain from smiling: She immediately sprung from her chair, and, throwing her arms around his neck, exclaimed, 'Ah, my son! my son! I have found you at last!'

"She afterwards told him, that if he had kept his austere

[1] [Smollett, while in Edinburgh at this time, was introduced to all the leading literati of Scotland, through the friendship of the late Dr Carlyle, minister of Inveresk—a man of great talents, whose Memoirs of himself, still in MS., are said to be highly curious.]

looks, and continued to *gloom*, he might have escaped detection some time longer; 'but your old roguish smile,' added she, 'betrayed you at once.'"

Having revisited the seat of his family, then possessed by his cousin, and spent a day or two at Glasgow, the scene of his early studies and frolics, Smollett returned to England, in order to undertake the direction of the *Critical Review*, a work which was established under patronage of the Tories and High-Church party; and which was intended to maintain their principles in opposition to the *Monthly Review*, conducted according to the sentiments of Whigs and Low-Churchmen.

Smollett's taste and talents qualified him highly for periodical criticism, as well as the promptitude of his wit, and the ready application which he could make of a large store of miscellaneous learning and acquired knowledge. But, on the other hand, he was always a hasty, and often a prejudiced judge; and, while he himself applied the critical scourge without mercy, he could not endure that those who felt his blows should either wince or complain under his chastisement. To murmur against his decrees was the sure way to incur further marks of his resentment, and thus his criticism deviated still more widely from dispassionate discussion, as the passions of the reviewer and of the author became excited into a clamorous contest of mutual rejoinder, recrimination, and abuse. Many petty squabbles, which occurred to teaze and embitter the life of Smollett, and to diminish the respectability with which his talents must otherwise have invested him, had their origin in his situation as Editor of

the *Critical Review.* He was engaged in one controversy with the notorious Shebbeare, in another with Dr Grainger,[1] the elegant author of the beautiful Ode to Solitude, and in several wrangles and brawls with persons of less celebrity.

But the most unlucky controversy in which his critical office involved our author, was that with Admiral Knowles, who had published a pamphlet vindicating his own conduct in the secret expedition against Rochfort, which disgracefully miscarried, in 1757. This defence was examined in the *Critical Review;* and Smollett, himself the author of the article, used the following intemperate expressions concerning Admiral Knowles. "He is an admiral without conduct, an engineer without knowledge, an officer without resolution, and a man without veracity." The admiral commenced a prosecution against the printer of the Review, declaring at the same time that he desired only to discover the author of the paragraph, and, should he prove a gentleman, to demand satisfaction of a different nature. This decoy, for such it proved, was the most effectual mode which could have been devised to draw the high-spirited Smollett within the danger of the law. When the court were about to pronounce judgment in the case, Smollett appeared, and took the consequences upon himself, and Admiral Knowles redeemed the pledge he had given, by enforcing judgment for a fine of one hundred pounds, and obtaining a sentence against the defendant of three months' imprisonment. How

1 [See Appendix, No. II.]

the Admiral reconciled his conduct to the rules usually observed by gentlemen, we are not informed; but the proceeding seems to justify even Smollett's strength of expression, when he terms him an officer without resolution, and a man without veracity. This imprisonment took place in 1759, and was, as we have stated already, the most memorable result of the various quarrels in which his duty as a critic engaged Dr Smollett. We resume the account of his literary labours, which our detail of these disputes has something interrupted.

About 1757, Smollett compiled and published without his name, a useful and entertaining collection, entitled, *A Compendium of Authentic and Entertaining Voyages, digested in a chronological series; the whole exhibiting a clear view of the Customs, Manners, Religion, Government, Commerce, and Natural History of most Nations of the Known World; illustrated with a variety of Genuine Charts, Maps, Plans, Heads, &c.* in 7 vols. 12mo. This collection introduced to the British public several voyages which were otherwise little known, and contained, amongst other articles not before published, Smollett's own account of the *Expedition to Carthagena*, of which he had given a short sketch in the *Adventures of Roderick Random.*

In the same year, 1757, the farce or comedy of *The Reprisals, or the Tars of Old England*, was written and acted, to animate the people against the French, with whom we were then at war. In pursuance of this plan, every species of national prejudice is called up and appealed to, and the Frenchman is represented as the living representa-

tive and original of all the caricature prints and ballads against the eaters of *soupe maigre*, and wearers of wooden shoes. The sailors are drawn to the life, as the sailors of Smollett always are. The Scotchman and Irishman are hit off with the touch of a caricaturist of skill and spirit. But the story of the piece is as trivial as possible, and, on the whole, it forms no marked exception to the observation, that successful novelists have been rarely distinguished by excellence in dramatic composition.

Garrick's generous conduct to Smollett upon this occasion, fully obliterated all recollection of old differences. The manager allowed the author his benefit on the sixth, instead of the ninth night of the piece, abated certain charges or advances usually made on such occasions, and himself performed Lusignan on the same evening, in order to fill the theatre.[1] Still, it seems, reports were in circulation

[1] [" Mr Garrick was applied to, I suppose with some fears of the author, lest his farce should not meet a favourable reception from a man whom he had so grossly slandered. However, the manager approved the piece; and he acted it in the best manner he could. *The Tars of Old England* procured the author a pretty large benefit; and here Mr Garrick had the satisfaction to gratify Smollett by not asking the price which might in rigour have been exacted by the managers for the charges of a benefit. Of this Mr Garrick apprized him in the following letter:—*Nov.* 26, 1757.—SIR,—There was a mistake made by our office-keepers to your prejudice, which has given me much uneasiness. Though the expense of our theatre every night amounts to L.90 and upwards, yet we take no more from gentlemen who write for the theatre, and who produce an original performance, than 60 guineas; they who only alter an old play pay 80 guineas for the expense, as in

that Smollett had spoken unkindly of Garrick, which called forth the following contradiction, in a letter which our author addressed to that celebrated performer.

"In justice to myself, I take the liberty to assure you, that if any person accuses me of having spoken disrespectfully of Mr Garrick, of having hinted that he solicited for my farce, or had interested views in bringing it upon the stage, he does me wrong, upon the word of a gentleman. The imputation is altogether false and malicious. Exclusive of other considerations, I could not be such an idiot to talk in that strain when my own interest so immediately required a different sort of conduct. Perhaps the same insidious methods have been taken to inflame former animosities, which on my part are forgotten and self-condemned. I must own you have acted in this affair of the farce with that candour, openness, and cordiality, which even mortify my pride, while they lay me under the most sensible obligation; and I shall not rest satisfied until I have an opportunity to convince Mr Garrick that my gratitude is at least as warm as any other of my passions. Meanwhile, I profess myself,

"Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"T. SMOLLETT."[1]

In the beginning of the year 1758, Smollett published his *Complete History of England, deduced*

the case of *Amphytrion;* this occasioned the mistake, which I did not discover till lately. Though it is very reasonable to take fourscore pounds for the expense of the house, yet, as we have not yet regulated this matter, I cannot possibly agree that Dr Smollett shall be the first precedent. I have enclosed a draft upon Mr Clutterbuck for the sum due to you.—I am, most sincerely, your most obedient humble servant, D. GARRICK.'"—DAVIES' *Life of Garrick*, vol. i., p. 319.]

[1] ["A short time after the representation of *The Reprisal*, the following panegyric on Mr Garrick, mingled with some disparaging reflections on Mr Moore, the author of *The Gamester*, and Dr Brown, the author of *Barbarossa*, appeared

from the Descent of Julius Cæsar to the Treaty of Aix-La-Chapelle, in 1748; in four volumes 4to. It is said that this voluminous work, containing the history of thirteen centuries, and written with uncommon spirit and correctness of language, was composed and finished for the press within fourteen months, one of the greatest exertions of facility of composition ever recorded in the history of literature. Within a space so brief it could not be expected that new facts should be produced; and all the novelty which Smollett's history could present must needs consist in the mode of stating facts, or in the reflections deduced from them. In this work, the author fully announced his political principles, which, notwithstanding his Whig education, were those of a modern Tory, and a favourer of the monarchial part of our constitution. For such a strain of sentiment, some readers will think no apology necessary; and by others none which we might propose would be listened to. Smollett has

in the *Critical Review,* unquestionably with the approbation of Smollett, and probably intended by him as a public retraction of the very unfair representation he had given in *Roderick Random* of his treatment of him respecting *The Regicide.*

"We often see this inimitable actor labouring through five tedious acts to support a lifeless piece, with a mixture of pity and indignation, and cannot help wishing there were in this age good poets to write for one who so well deserves them.

'Quidquid calcaverit hic rosa fiet.'

"He has the art, like the Lydian king, of turning all that he touches into gold, and can ensure applause to every fortunate bard, from inimitable Shakspeare and Old Ben, to gentle Neddy Moore, and the author of *Barbarossa.*"—ANDERSON'S *Life of Smollett,* p 56.]

made his own defence, in a letter to Dr Moore, dated 2d January, 1758.

"I deferred answering your kind letter, until I should have finished my history, which is now completed. I was agreeably surprised to hear that my work had met with any approbation at Glasgow, for it was not at all calculated for that meridian. The last volume will, I doubt not, be severely censured by the west-country Whigs of Scotland.

"I desire you will divest yourself of prejudice, at least as much as you can, before you begin to peruse it, and consider well the facts before you pass judgment. Whatever may be its defect, I protest before God I have, as far as in me lay, adhered to truth, without espousing any faction, though I own I sat down to write with a warm side to those principles in which I was educated; but in the course of my enquiries, some of the Whig ministers turned out such a set of sordid knaves, that I could not help stigmatizing them for their want of integrity and sentiment."

In another letter to Dr Moore, dated Chelsea, September 28, he expresses himself as follows:—

"I speak not of the few who think like philosophers, abstracted from the notions of the vulgar. The little petulant familiarities of our friend I can forgive, in consideration of the good-will he has always manifested towards me and my concerns. He is mistaken, however, in supposing that I have imbibed priestly notions; I consider the church not as a religious, but a political establishment, so minutely interwoven in our constitution, that the one cannot be detached from the other, without the most imminent danger of destruction to both. The use which our friend makes of the *Critical Review* is whimsical enough;[1] but I shall be glad if he uses it at any rate. I have not had leisure to do much in that work for some time past, therefore I hope you will not ascribe the articles indiscriminately to me; for I am equally averse to the praise and censure that belong to other men. Indeed, I am sick of both, and wish to God my circumstances would allow

[1] Dr Moore's friend was so much enraged at some criticisms in that Review, that he continued to take it for no other purpose than that he might read all the publications censured by it, and none of those which it praised.

me to consign my pen to oblivion. I really believe that mankind grow every day more malicious.

"You will not be sorry to hear, that the weekly sale of the History has increased to above ten thousand. A French gentleman of talents and erudition has undertaken to translate it into that language, and I have promised to supply him with corrections."

As a powerful political party were insulted, and, as they alleged, misrepresented in Smollett's history, they readily lent their influence and countenance to the proprietors of Rapin's History, who, alarmed at the extensive sale of Smollett's rival work, deluged the public with criticisms and invectives against the author and his book. In process of time the controversy slept, and the main fault of the history was found to be, that the haste with which the author had accomplished his task, had necessarily occasioned his sitting down contented with superficial, and sometimes inaccurate, information.

In the course of 1760, and 1761, *The Adventures of Sir Lancelot Greaves* appeared, in detached portions, in various numbers of the *British Magazine*, or *Monthly Repository*, being written for the purpose of giving some spirit and popularity to that miscellany. Smollett appears to have executed his task with very little premeditation. During a part of the time he was residing at Paxton, in Berwickshire, on a visit to the late George Home, Esq., and when post-time drew near, he used to retire for half an hour or an hour, to prepare the necessary quantity of *copy*, as it is technically called in the printing-house, which he never

gave himself the trouble to correct, or even to read over. *Sir Lancelot Greaves* was published separately, in 1762.

The idea of this work was probably suggested to our author during his labours upon *Don Quixote*, and the plan forms a sort of corollary to that celebrated romance. The leading imperfection is the utter extravagance of the story, as applicable to England, and to the period when it is supposed to have happened. In Spain, ere the ideas of chivalry were extinct amongst that nation of romantic Hidalgos, the turn of Don Quixote's frenzy seems not altogether extravagant, and the armour which he assumed was still the ordinary garb of battle. But in England, and in modern times, that a young, amiable, and otherwise sensible man, acquainted also with the romance of Cervantes, should have adopted a similar whim, gives good foundation for the obvious remark of Ferret: "What! you set up for a modern Don Quixote! The scheme is too stale and extravagant: what was a humorous and well-timed satire in Spain near two hundred years ago, will make but a sorry jest, when really acted from affectation, at this time of day in England." To this Sir Lancelot replies, by a tirade which does not remove the objection so shrewdly stated by the misanthrope, affirming that he only warred against the foes of virtue and decorum; or, in his own words, "had assumed the armour of his forefathers, to remedy evils which the law cannot reach, to detect fraud and treason, abase insolence, mortify pride, discourage slander,

disgrace immodesty, and stigmatize ingratitude." The degree of sanity which the amiable enthusiast possesses ought to have shown him, that the generous career he had undertaken would be much better accomplished without his armour, than with that superfluous and ridiculous appendage; and that for all the purposes of reformation to be effected in England, his pocket-book, filled with bank-notes, would be a better auxiliary than either sword or lance. In short, it becomes clear to the reader, that Sir Lancelot wears panoply only that his youthful elegance and address, his bright armour and generous courser, may make him the more exact counterpart to the Knight of La Mancha.

If it be unnatural that Sir Lancelot should become a knight-errant, the whim of Crowe, th captain of a merchant vessel, adopting, at second-hand, the same folly, is, on the same grounds, still more exceptionable. There is nothing in the honest seaman's life or profession which renders it at all possible that he should have caught contagion from the insanity of Sir Lancelot. But, granting the author's premises,—and surely we often make large concessions with less advantage in prospect,—the quantity of comic humour which Smollett has extracted out of Crowe and Crabshaw, has as much hearty mirth in it as can be found even in his more finished compositions. The inferior characters are all sketched with the same bold, free, and peculiar touch that distinguishes this powerful writer; and, besides these we have named, Ferret, and Clarke, the kind-hearted attorney's clerk, with several subordinate personages, have all the vivacity of

Smollett's strong pencil. Aurelia Darnel is by far the most feminine, and, at the same time, ladylike person, to whom the author has introduced us. There is also some novelty of situation and incident, and Smollett's recent imprisonment in the King's Bench, for the attack on Admiral Knowles, enabled him to enrich his romance with a portrait of the unfortunate Theodore, King of Corsica, and other companions in his captivity, whose misfortunes or frolics had conducted them to that place of imprisonment.

Smollett's next labour was to lend his aid in finishing that useful compendium, *The Modern Universal History*, to which he contributed the Histories of France, Italy, and Germany. In the year 1761, he published, in detached numbers, his *Continuation of the History of England*, which he carried on until he brought the narrative down to 1765. The sale of this work was very extensive; and although Smollett acquired by both histories about L.2000, which, in those days, was a large sum, yet the bookseller is said to have made L.1000 clear profit on the very day he made his bargain, by transferring it to a brother of the trade. This Continuation, appended as it usually is to the History of England by Hume, forms a classical and standard work. It is not our present province to examine the particular merits of Smollett as a Historian; but it cannot be denied that, as a clear and distinct narrative of facts, strongly and vigorously told, with a laudable regard to truth and impartiality, the Continuation may vie with our best historical works. The author was incapable of being

swayed by fear or favour; and where his judgment is influenced, we can see that he was only misled by an honest belief in the truth of his own arguments. At the same time, the Continuation, like Smollett's original History, has the defects incident to hurried composition, and likewise those which naturally attach themselves to contemporary narrative. Smollett had no access to those hidden causes of events which time brings forth in the slow progress of ages; and his work is chiefly compiled from those documents of a public and general description, which often contain rather the colourable pretexts which statesmen are pleased to assign for their actions, than the real motives themselves. The English history, it is true, suffers less than those of other countries from this restriction of materials; for there are so many eyes upon our public proceedings, and they undergo such sifting discussion, both in and out of Parliament, that the actual motives of those in whose hands government is vested for the time, become speedily suspected, even if they are not actually avowed or unveiled. Upon the whole, with all its faults and deficiencies, it may be long ere we have a better History of Britain, during this latter period, than is to be found in the pages of Smollett.

Upon the accession of George III., and the commencement of Lord Bute's administration, Smollett's pen was employed in the defence of the young monarch's government, in a weekly paper called *The Briton*, which was soon silenced, and driven out of the field by the celebrated *North Briton*, conducted by John Wilkes. Smollett had been

on terms of kindness with this distinguished demagogue, and had twice applied to his friendship,—once for the kind purpose of obtaining the dismission of Dr Johnson's black servant, Francis Barber, from the navy, into which he had inconsiderately entered;[1] and again, to mediate betwixt himself and Admiral Knowles, in the matter of the prose-

[1] ["Johnson's negro servant, Francis Barber, having left him, and been some time at sea, not pressed, as has been supposed, but with his own consent, it appears, from a letter to John Wilkes, Esq., from Dr Smollett, that his master kindly interested himself in procuring his release from a state of life of which Johnson always expressed the utmost abhorrence. He once said, 'No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into a jail; for being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned;' and at another time, 'A man in a jail has more room, better food, and commonly better company.' The letter was as follows:—'*Chelsea, 16th March*, 1759.—DEAR SIR,—I am again your petitioner, in behalf of that great CHAM of literature, Samuel Johnson. His black servant, whose name is Francis Barber, has been pressed on board the Stag Frigate, Captain Angel, and our lexicographer is in great distress. He says the boy is a sickly lad, of a delicate frame, and particularly subject to a malady in his throat, which renders him very unfit for his Majesty's service. You know what matter of animosity the said Johnson has against you; and I dare say you desire no better opportunity of resenting it, than that of laying him under an obligation. He was humble enough to desire my assistance on this occasion, though he and I were never Cater-cousins; and I gave him to understand, that I would make application to my friend Mr Wilkes, who perhaps, by his interest with, Dr Hay and Mr Elliot, might be able to procure the discharge of his lacquey. It would be superfluous to say more on the subject, which I leave to your own consideration; but I cannot let slip this opportunity of declaring, that I am, with the most inviolable esteem and attachment, dear sir, your affectionate, obliged, humble servant, T. SMOLLETT.'"—CROKER'S *Boswell*, vol. i., p. 337-8.]

cution. Closer ties than these are readily dissolved before the fire of politics. The friends became political opponents; and Smollett, who had to plead an unpopular cause to unwilling auditors, and who, as a Scotchman, shared deeply and personally in that unpopularity, was compelled to give up *The Briton*, more, it would seem, from lack of spirit in his patron Lord Bute, to sustain the contest any longer, than from any deficiency of zeal on his own part. So, at least, we may interpret the following passage, in a letter which he wrote from Italy to Caleb Whiteford, in 1770:—

> "I hope you will not discontinue your endeavours to represent faction and false patriotism in their true colours, though I believe the ministry little deserves that any man of genius should draw his pen in their defence. They seem to inherit the absurd stoicism of Lord Bute, who set himself up as a pillory, to be pelted by all the blackguards of England, upon the supposition that they would grow tired and leave off. I don't find that your ministers take any pains even to vindicate their moral characters from the foulest imputations; I would never desire a stronger proof of a bad heart, than a total disregard of reputation. A late nobleman, who had been a member of several administrations, owned to me, that one good writer was of more importance to the government than twenty placemen in the House of Commons."

In 1763, Smollett lent his assistance, or at least his name, to a translation of Voltaire's works, and also to a compilation entitled, *The Present State of all Nations, containing a Geographical, Natural, Commercial, and Political History of all the Countries of the known World.*

About this time, Elizabeth, an amiable and accomplished young person, the only offspring of Smollett's marriage, and to whom her father was

devotedly attached, died in the fifteenth year of her life, leaving her parents overwhelmed with the deepest sorrow.

Ill health aided the effects of grief, and it was under these circumstances that Smollett undertook a journey to France and Italy, in which countries he resided from 1763 to 1766. Soon after his return in 1766, he published his *Travels through France and Italy, containing Observations on Character, Customs, Religion, Government, Police, Commerce, Arts, and Antiquities, with a particular Description of the Town, Territory, and Climate of Nice; to which is added, a Register of the Weather, kept during a Residence of Eighteen Months in that City;* in 2 vols. 8vo, in the form of letters to his friends in England, from different parts of those countries.

Smollett's Travels are distinguished by acuteness of remark, and shrewdness of expression,—by strong sense and pointed humour; but the melancholy state of the author's mind induced him to view all the ordinary objects from which travellers receive pleasure, with cynical contempt. Although so lately a sufferer by the most injurious national prejudices, he failed not to harbour and cherish all those which he himself had formerly adopted against the foreign countries through which he travelled. Nature had either denied Smollett the taste necessary to understand and feel the beauties of art, or else his embittered state of mind had, for the time, entirely deprived him of the power of enjoying them. The harsh censures which he passes on the Venus de Medicis, and upon the

Pantheon; and the sarcasm with which his criticisms are answered by Sterne,[1] are both well known. Yet, be it said without offence to the memory of that witty and elegant writer, it is more easy to assume, in composition, an air of alternate gaiety and sensibility, than to practise the virtues of generosity and benevolence, which Smollett exercised during his whole life, though often, like his own Matthew Bramble, under the disguise of peevishness and irritability. Sterne's writings show much flourish concerning virtues of which his life is understood to have produced little fruit; the temper of Smollett was

> ——— "like a lusty winter,
> Frosty, but kindly."

On his return to Britain, in 1766, he visited Scotland for the last time, and had the pleasure of

1 [" The learned Smelfungus," says Sterne, in allusion to Smollett, " travelled from Boulogne to Paris,—from Paris to Rome,—and so on;—but he set out with the spleen and jaundice; and every object he passed by was discoloured or distorted. He wrote an account of them; but 'twas nothing but the account of his miserable feelings. I met Smelfungus in the grand portico of the Pantheon,—he was just coming out of it. '*'Tis nothing but a huge cock-pit*,' said he. ' I wish you had said nothing worse of the Venus of Medicis,' replied I; for in passing through Florence, I had heard he had fallen foul upon the goddess, and used her worse than a common strumpet, without the least provocation in nature.

" I popp'd upon Smelfungus again at Turin, in his return home; and a sad tale of sorrowful adventures he had to tell, ' wherein he spoke of moving accidents by flood and field, and of the cannibals that each other eat; the Anthropophagi.' He had been flay'd alive, and bedevil'd, and used worse than St Bartholomew at every stage he had come at. ' I'll tell it,' cried Smelfungus, ' to the world.'—' You had better tell it,' said I, ' to your physician.' "—*Sentimental Journey.*]

receiving a parent's last embrace. His health was now totally ruined. Constant rheumatism, and the pain arising from a neglected ulcer, which had got into a bad state, rendered him a victim to excruciating agonies. He afterwards recovered in a great degree, by applying mercurial ointment, and using the solution of corrosive sublimate. He gives a full account of the process of the cure in a letter to Dr Moore, which concludes thus: "Had I been as well in summer, I should have exquisitely enjoyed my expedition to Scotland, which was productive of nothing to me but misery and disgust. Between friends, I am now convinced that my brain was in some measure affected; for I had a kind of *coma vigil* upon me from April to November without intermission.[1] In consideration of

[1] [" The remarkable expression of a *Coma Vigil*," says D'Israeli, " difficult to explain, may be described by a verse of Shakspeare, in his antithetical account of love, a passion made up of contrarieties. Thus the *Coma Vigil* was

" Still-waking sleep! that is not what it is."

Calamities of Authors, vol. i., p. 22.

" Pope partook of a calamity not uncommon in the family of genius, and fell into that state of exhaustion, which Smollett once experienced during half a year, of a ' *Coma Vigil*,' an affection of the brain, where the principle of life is so reduced, that all external objects appear to be passing in a dream; a sort of torpid indistinct existence. This curious circumstance is related by Spence. ' His perpetual application (after he set to study of himself) reduced him in four years to so bad a state of health, that after trying physicians in vain, he resolved to give way to his distemper, and *sat down calmly in a full expectation of death in a short time*. Under this thought he wrote letters to take *a last farewell* of some of his more particular friends, and amongst the rest one to the Abbé Southcot. The Abbé was extremely concerned, both for his very ill state of health, and the resolution he said he had taken.

these circumstances, I know you will forgive all my peevishness and discontent; and tell good Mrs Moore, to whom I present my most cordial respects, that, with regard to me, she has as yet seen nothing but the wrong side of the tapestry."

Finding himself at liberty to resume his literary labours, Smollett published, in 1769, the political satire, called *The Adventures of an Atom*, in which are satirized the several leaders of political parties, from 1754 till the dissolution of Lord Chatham's administration. His inefficient patron, Lord Bute, is not spared in this work; and Chatham is severely treated under the name of Jowler. The inconsistency of this great minister, in encouraging the German war, seems to have altered Smollett's opinion of his patriotism; and he does his acknowledged talents far less than justice, endeavouring by every means to undervalue the successes of his brilliant administration, or to impute them to causes independent of his measures. The chief purpose of the work (besides that of giving the author the opportunity to raise his hand, like that of Ishmael, against every man) is to inspire a national horror of continental connexions.

Shortly after the publication of *The Adventures of an Atom*, disease again assailed Smollett with redoubled violence. Attempts being vainly made

He thought there might yet be hopes, and went immediately to Dr Radcliffe, with whom he was well acquainted, told him Mr Pope's case, got full directions from him, and carried them down to Mr Pope in Windsor Forest. The chief thing, the doctor ordered him, was to apply less, and to ride every day; the following his advice soon restored him to his health." —*Quarterly Review*, July, 1820.]

to obtain for him the office of Consul, in some port of the Mediterranean, he was compelled to seek a warmer climate, without better means of provision than his own precarious finances could afford.[1] The kindness of his distinguished friend and countryman, Dr Armstrong, (then abroad,) procured for Dr and Mrs Smollett a house at Monte Novo, a village situated on the side of a mountain overlooking the sea, in the neighbourhood of Leghorn; a romantic and salutary abode, where he prepared for the press the last, and, like music "sweetest in the close," the most pleasing of his compositions, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*. This delightful work was published in 1771, in three volumes, 12mo, and very favourably received by the public.

The very ingenious scheme of describing the various effects produced upon different members of the same family by the same objects, was not original, though it has been supposed to be so. Anstey, the facetious author of the *New Bath Guide*, had employed it six or seven years before *Humphry Clinker* appeared. But Anstey's diverting satire was but a light sketch, compared to the finished and elaborate manner in which Smollett has, in the first place, identified his characters, and then fitted them with language, sentiments, and

[1] ["Smollet had written both for and against ministers, perhaps not always from independent motives; but to find the man whose genius has given exhilaration to millions, thus reduced to beg, and to be refused the means that might have smoothed the pillow of his death-bed in a foreign country, is a circumstance which fills the mind rather too strongly with the recollection of Cervantes."—CAMPBELL.]

powers of observation, in exact correspondence with their talents, temper, condition, and disposition. The portrait of Matthew Bramble, in which Smollett described his own peculiarities, using towards himself the same rigid anatomy which he exercised upon others, is unequalled in the line of fictitious composition. It is peculiarly striking to observe, how often, in admiring the shrewd and sound sense, active benevolence, and honourable sentiments combined in Matthew, we lose sight of the humorous peculiarities of his character, and with what effect they are suddenly recalled to our remembrance, just at the time and in the manner when we least expect them. All shrewish old maids, and simple waiting-women, which shall hereafter be drawn, must be contented with the praise of approaching in merit to Mrs Tabitha Bramble and Winifred Jenkins. The peculiarities of the hot-headed young Cantab, and the girlish romance of his sister, are admirably contrasted with the sense and pettish half-playful misanthropy of their uncle; and Humphry Clinker (who by the way resembles Strap, supposing that excellent person to have a turn towards methodism) is, as far as he goes, equally delightful. Captain Lismahago was probably no violent caricature, allowing for the manners of the time. We can remember a good and gallant officer who was said to have been his prototype, but believe the opinion was only entertained from the striking resemblance which he bore in externals to the doughty captain.

When *Humphry Clinker* appeared in London, the popular odium against the Scotch nation, which Wilkes and Churchill had excited, was not yet appeased, and Smollett had enemies amongst the periodical critics, who failed not to charge him with undue partiality to his own country. They observed, maliciously, but not untruly, that the cynicism of Matthew Bramble becomes gradually softened as he journeys northward, and that he who equally detested Bath and London, becomes wonderfully reconciled to walled cities and the hum of men, when he finds himself an inhabitant of the northern metropolis. It is not worth defending so excellent a work against so weak an objection. The author was a dying man, and his thoughts were turned towards the scenes of youthful gaiety and the abode of early friends, with a fond partiality, which, had they been even less deserving of his attachment, would have been not only pardonable, but praiseworthy.

Moritur, et moirens dulces reminiscitur Argos.

Smollett failed not, as he usually did, to introduce himself, with the various causes which he had to complain of the world, into the pages of this delightful romance. He appears as Mr Serle, and more boldly under his own name, and in describing his own mode of living, he satirizes without mercy the book-makers of the day, who had experienced his kindness without repaying him by gratitude. It does not, however, seem perfectly fair to make them atone for their ungracious return to his hos-

pitality, by serving up their characters as a banquet to the public; and, in fact, it too much resembles the design of which Pallet accuses the Physician, of converting his guests into patients, in order to make him amends for the expense of the entertainment.

But criticism, whether candid or unjust, was soon to be of little consequence to the author. After the publication of his last work, he lingered through the summer, and at length, after enduring the vicissitudes of a wasting and painful disorder with unabated composure, the world lost Tobias Smollett, on the 21st October, 1771, at the untimely age of only fifty-one years. There is little doubt that grief for the loss of his daughter, a feeling of ungrateful neglect from those who were called upon to lend him assistance, a present sense of confined circumstances, which he was daily losing the power of enlarging by his own exertions, together with gloomy apprehensions for the future, materially aided the progress of the mortal disorder by which he was removed.[1]

More happy in this respect than Fielding, Smollett's grave at Leghorn is distinguished by a plain monument, erected by his widow, to which Dr

[1] [" Had Smollett lived a few years longer," says Dr Anderson, " he must have inherited the estate of Bonhill, of about L.1000 a-year, by the death of his cousin, Mr Smollett, whose heir of entail he was; and who would, in all probability, have bequeathed him, what he could no longer retain, the rest of his fortune, of nearly the same value, both of which fell to his sister, Mrs Telfer."—*Life of Smollett*, p. 102.]

Armstrong, his constant and faithful friend, supplied the following spirited inscription:—

Hic ossa conduntur
TOBIÆ SMOLLETT, Scoti;
Qui, prosapia generosa et antiqua natus,
Priscæ virtutis exemplar emicuit;
Aspectu ingenuo,
Corpore valido,
Pectore animoso,
Indole apprime benigna,
Et fere supra facultates munifica,
Insignis.
Ingenio feraci, faceto, versatili,
Omnigenæ fere doctrinæ mire capaci,
Varia fabularum dulcedine,
Vitam moresque hominum,
Ubertate summa ludens, depinxit.
Adverso, interim, nefas! tali tantoque alumno
Nisi quo satyræ opipare supplebat,
Seculo impio, ignavo, fatuo,
Quo musæ vix nisi nothæ
Mecænatulis Britannicis
Fovebantur.
In memoriam
Optimi et amabilis omnino viri,
Permultis amicis desiderati,
Hocce marmor
Dilectissima simul et amantissima conjux
L. M.
Sacravit.

In the year 1774, a column was erected to Smollett's memory near the house in which he was born, by his cousin, James Smollett, Esq. of Bonhill, with the following nervous and classical inscription, written by Professor George Stewart of Edinburgh, and partly by the late John Ramsay, Esq. of Och-

tertyre, and corrected by Dr Johnson. The lines printed in Italics are by the latter:

Siste, viator!
Si leporis ingeniique venam benignam,
Si morum callidissimum pictorem,
Unquam es miratus,
Immorare paululum memoriæ
TOBIÆ SMOLLETT, M. D.
Viri virtutibus hisce
Quas in homine et cive
Et laudes et imiteris,
Haud mediocriter ornati:
Qui in literis variis versatus,
Postquam, felicitate sibi propria,
Sese posteris commendaverat,
Morte acerba raptus
Anno ætatis 51.
Eheu! quam procul a patria!
Prope Liburni portum in Italia,
Jacet sepultus.
Tali tantoque viro, patruelo suo,
Cui in decursu lampada
Se potius tradidisse decuit,
Hanc Columnam,
Amoris, eheu! inane monumentum
In ipsis Levinæ ripis,
Quas versiculis sub exitu vitæ illustratas,
Primis infans vagitibus personuit,
Ponendam curavit
JACOBUS SMOLLETT de Bonhill.
Abi et reminiscere,
Hoc quidem honore,
Non modo defuncti memoriæ,
Verum etiam exemplo, prospectum esse;
Aliis enim, si modo digni sint,
Idem erit virtutis præmium! [1]

The widow of Smollett long continued an inhabitant of the neighbourhood of Leghorn, supporting

[1] [Dr Johnson visited Mr James Smollett, at Bonhill, on

herself in obscurity and with difficulty, upon the small remnant of fortune he had been able to be-

Thursday, 28th October, 1773; and the reader will find an account of the Doctor's emendations on the Inscription of the Pillar in Croker's *Boswell*, vol. iii., p. 61-63.

The following is an extract from D'Israeli's *Calamities of Authors*:—

"Of most 'Authors by profession,' who has displayed a more fruitful genius, and exercised more intense industry, with a loftier sense of his independence, than Smollett? But look into his life, and enter into his feelings, and you will be shocked at the disparity of his situation with the genius of the man. His life was a succession of struggles, vexations, and disappointments; yet of success in his writings. Smollett, who is a great poet, though he has written little in verse, and whose rich genius had composed the most original pictures of human life, was compelled by his wants to debase his name by setting it to Voyages and Translations which he never could have read. When he had worn himself down in the service of the public, or the booksellers, there remained not, of all his slender remunerations, in the last stage of life, sufficient to convey him to a cheap country and a restorative air, on the Continent. The father may have thought himself fortunate, that the daughter whom he loved with more than common affection was no more to share in his wants; but the husband had by his side the faithful companion of his life, left without a wreck of fortune. Smollett gradually perishing in a foreign land, neglected by an admiring public, and without fresh resources from the booksellers, who were receiving the income of his works—threw out his injured feelings in the character of *Bramble*; the warm generosity of his temper, but not his genius, seemed fleeting with his breath. Yet when Smollett died, and his widow in a foreign land was raising a plain monument over his dust, her love and her piety but "made the little less." She perished in friendless solitude! Yet Smollett dead—soon an ornamented column is raised at the place of his birth, while the grave of the author seemed to multiply the editions of his works. There are indeed grateful feelings in the public at large for a favourite author; but the awful testimony of those feelings by its gradual progress, must appear beyond the grave! They visit the column conse-

queath to her. We remember a benefit play being performed on her account, at Edinburgh, in which Houston Stewart Nicholson, Esq., an amateur performer, appeared in the part of Pierre. The profits are said to have amounted to L.300. A prologue, written for the occasion, by Mr Graham of Gartmore, was spoken by the late Mr Woods, of the Theatre-Royal, Edinburgh.

Smollett's *Ode to Independence*, the most characteristic of his poetical works, was published, two years after his death, by the Messrs Foulis of Glasgow. The mythological commencement is eminently beautiful.

His name was appended to a version of Telemachus, as, during his life, it had appeared to a translation of Gil Blas, to which it is supposed he contributed little or nothing more. In 1785, a farce, called *The Israelites*, or *The Pampered Nabob*, was acted on the Covent Garden stage, for the benefit of Mr Aiken. It was ascribed to Smollett on very dubious evidence, was indifferently received, and has never since appeared, either on the stage or in print.

THE person of Smollett was eminently handsome, his features prepossessing, and, by the joint testimony of all his surviving friends, his conversation in the highest degree instructive and amusing. Of his disposition, those who have read his works (and who has not done so?) may form a very accu-

crated by his name, and his features are most loved, most venerated in the bust."—*Calamities* vol. i., p. 17.]

rate estimate; for in each of them he has presented, and sometimes under various points of view, the leading features of his own character, without disguising the most unfavourable of them. Nay, there is room to believe, that he rather exaggerated than softened that cynical turn of temper, which was the principal fault of his disposition, and which engaged him in so many quarrels. It is remarkable, that all his heroes, from Roderick Random downward, possess a haughty, fierce irritability of disposition, until the same features appear softened, and rendered venerable by age and philosophy, in Matthew Bramble. The sports in which they most delight are those which are attended with disgrace, mental pain, and bodily mischief to others; and their humanity is never represented as interrupting the course of their frolics. We know not that Smollett had any other marked failing, save that which he himself has so often and so liberally acknowledged. When unseduced by his satirical propensities, he was kind, generous, and humane to others; bold, upright, and independent in his own character; stooped to no patron, sued for no favour, but honestly and honourably maintained himself on his literary labours; when, if he was occasionally employed in work which was beneath his talents, the disgrace must remain with those who saved not such a genius from the degrading drudgery of compiling and translating. He was a doating father, and an affectionate husband; and the warm zeal with which his memory was cherished by his surviving friends, showed clearly the reliance which they placed upon his regard. Even his

resentments, though often hastily adopted, and incautiously expressed, were neither ungenerous nor enduring. He was open to conviction, and ready to make both acknowledgment and allowance when he had done injustice to others, willing also to forgive and to be reconciled when he had received it at their hand.

Churchill,[1] and other satirists, falsely ascribe to Smollett the mean passion of literary envy, to which his nature was totally a stranger. The manner in which he mentions Fielding and Richardson in the account of the literature of the century, shows how much he understood, and how liberally he praised, the merit of those, who, in the view of the world, must have been regarded as his immediate rivals. "The genius of Cervantes," in his generous expression, "was transfused into the novels of Fielding, who painted the characters, and ridiculed the follies of life, with equal strength,

[1] The article upon *The Rosciad*, in the *Critical Review*, (that fertile mother of all the dissensions in which Smollett was engaged,) was so severe as to call forth the bard's bitter resentment, in the 2d edition; where, ascribing the offensive article to Smollett, in which he was mistaken, he thus apostrophizes him:

> "Whence could arise this mighty critic spleen,
> The Muse a trifler, and her theme so mean?
> What had I done, that angry heav'n should send
> The bitterest foe where most I wish'd a friend?
> Oft hath my tongue been wanton at thy name,
> And hail'd the honours of thy matchless fame.
> For me let hoary *Fielding* bite the ground,
> So nobler *Pickle* stand superbly bound;
> From *Livy's* temples tear th' historic crown,
> Which, with more justice, blooms upon thine own," &c.

A poet of inferior note, author of a poem called *The Race*, has brought the same charge against Smollett, in still coarser terms.

humour, and propriety;"—a passage which we record with pleasure, as a proof that the disagreement which existed betwixt Smollett and Fielding did not prevent his estimating with justice, and recording in suitable terms, the merits of the Father of the English Novel. His historian, with equal candour, proceeds to tell his reader, that "the laudable aim of enlisting the passions on the side of virtue was successfully pursued by Richardson, in his *Pamela*, *Clarissa*, and *Grandison*, a species of writing equally new and extraordinary, where, mingled with much superfluity and impertinence, we find a sublime system of ethics, an amazing knowledge and command of human nature."[1]

1 [Dr Moore thus sums up his account of Smollett:—"The person of Dr Smollett was stout and well proportioned, his countenance engaging, his manner reserved, with a certain air of dignity that seemed to indicate that he was not unconscious of his own powers. He was of a disposition so humane and generous, that he was ever ready to serve the unfortunate, and on some occasions to assist them beyond what his circumstances could justify. Though few could penetrate with more acuteness into character, yet none was more apt to overlook misconduct when attended with misfortune.

"He lived in an hospitable manner, but he despised that hospitality which is founded on ostentation, which entertains only those whose situations in life flatters the vanity of the entertainer, or such as can make returns of the same kind; that hospitality which keeps a debtor and creditor account of dinners. Smollett invited to his plain but plentiful table, the persons whose characters he esteemed, in whose conversation he delighted; and many for no other reason, than because they stood in need of his countenance and protection.

"As nothing was more abhorrent to his nature than pertness or intrusion, few things could render him more indignant than a cold reception. To this, however, he imagined he had sometimes been exposed on his applications in favour

In leaving Smollett's personal for his literary character, it is impossible not to consider the latter as contrasted with that of his eminent contemporary, Fielding. It is true, that such comparisons, though recommended by the example of Plutarch, are not in general the best mode of estimating individual merit. But, in the present case, the contemporary existence, the private history, accomplishments, talents, pursuits, and, unfortunately, the fates of these two great authors, are so closely allied, that it is scarce possible to name the one without exciting recollections of the other. Fielding and Smollett were both born in the highest rank of society, both educated to learned professions, yet both obliged to follow miscellaneous

of others; for himself he never made an application to any great man in his life.

"Free from vanity, Smollett had a considerable share of pride, and great sensibility; his passions were easily moved, and too often impetuous when roused; he could not conceal his contempt of folly, his detestation of fraud, nor refrain from proclaiming his indignation against every instance of oppression.

"Though Smollett possessed a versatility of style in writing, which he could accommodate to every character, he had no suppleness in his conduct. His learning, diligence, and natural acuteness, would have rendered him eminent in the science of medicine, had he persevered in that profession; other parts of his character were ill suited for augmenting his practice. He could neither stoop to impose on credulity, nor humour caprice.

"He was of an intrepid, independent, imprudent disposition; equally incapable of deceit and adulation, and more disposed to cultivate the acquaintance of those he could serve than of those who could serve him. What wonder that a man of his character was not what is called successful in life!"]

literature as the means of subsistence. Both were confined, during their lives, by the narrowness of their circumstances,—both united a humorous cynicism with generosity and good-nature,—both died of the diseases incident to a sedentary life, and to literary labour,—and both drew their last breath in a foreign land, to which they retreated under the adverse circumstances of a decayed constitution, and an exhausted fortune.

Their studies were no less similar than their lives. They both wrote for the stage, and neither of them successfully. They both meddled in politics, and never obtained effectual patronage; they both wrote travels, in which they showed that their good-humour was wasted under the sufferings of their disease; and to conclude, they were both so eminently successful as novelists, that no other English author of that class has a right to be mentioned in the same breath with Fielding and Smollett.

If we compare the works of these two great masters yet more closely, we may assign to Fielding, with little hesitation, the praise of a higher and a purer taste than was shown by his rival; more elegance of composition and expression; a nearer approach to the grave irony of Swift and Cervantes; a great deal more address or felicity in the conduct of his story; and, finally, a power of describing amiable and virtuous characters, and of placing before us heroes, and especially heroines, of a much higher as well as more pleasing character than Smollett was able to present.

Thus the art and felicity with which the story

of *Tom Jones* evolves itself, is nowhere found in Smollett's novels, where the heroes pass from one situation in life, and from one stage of society, to another totally unconnected, except that, as in ordinary life, the adventures recorded, though not bearing upon each other, or on the catastrophe, befall the same personage. Characters are introduced and dropped without scruple, and, at the end of the work, the hero is found surrounded by a very different set of associates from those with whom his fortune seemed at first indissolubly connected. Neither are the characters which Smollett designed should be interesting, half so amiable as his readers could desire. The low-minded Roderick Random, who borrows Strap's money, wears his clothes, and, rescued from starving by the attachment of that simple and kind-hearted adherent, rewards him by squandering his substance, receiving his attendance as a servant, and beating him when the dice ran against him, is not to be named in one day with the open-hearted, good-humoured, and noble-minded Tom Jones, whose libertinism (one particular omitted) is perhaps rendered but too amiable by his good qualities. We believe there are few readers who are not disgusted with the miserable reward assigned to Strap in the closing chapter of the novel. Five hundred pounds, (scarce the value of the goods he had presented to his master,) and the hand of a reclaimed street-walker, even when added to a Highland farm, seem but a poor recompense for his faithful and disinterested attachment. The Englishman is a hundred times more grateful to Partridge, (whose morality

is very questionable, and who follows Jones's fortunes with the self-seeking fidelity of a cur, who, while he loves his master, has his eye upon the flesh-pots,) than Roderick Random shows himself towards the disinterested and generous attachment of poor Strap. There may be one way of explaining this difference of taste betwixt these great authors, by recollecting, that in Scotland, at that period, the absolute devotion of a follower to his master was something which entered into, and made part of the character of the lower ranks in general; and therefore domestic fidelity was regarded as a thing more of course than in England, and received less gratitude than it deserved, in consideration of its more frequent occurrence.

But, to recur to our parallel betwixt the characters of Fielding and those of Smollett, we should do Jones great injustice by weighing him in the balance with the wild and ferocious Pickle, who, —besides his gross and base brutality towards Emilia, besides his ingratitude to his uncle, and the savage propensity which he shows, in the pleasure he takes to torment others by practical jokes resembling those of a fiend in glee,—exhibits a low and ungentlemanlike tone of thinking, only one degree higher than that of Roderick Random. The blackguard frolic of introducing a prostitute, in a false character, to his sister, is a sufficient instance of that want of taste and feeling which Smollett's admirers are compelled to acknowledge, may be detected in his writings. It is yet more impossible to compare Sophia or Amelia to the females of Smollett, who (excepting Aurelia Darnel) are

drawn as the objects rather of appetite than of affection, and excite no higher or more noble interest than might be created by the houris of the Mahomedan paradise.

It follows from this superiority on the side of Fielding, that his novels exhibit, more frequently than those of Smollett, scenes of distress, which excite the sympathy and pity of the reader. No one can refuse his compassion to Jones, when, by a train of practices upon his generous and open character, he is expelled from his benefactor's house under the foulest and most heart-rending accusations; but we certainly sympathize very little in the distress of Pickle, brought on by his own profligate profusion, and enhanced by his insolent misanthropy. We are only surprised that his predominating arrogance does not weary out the benevolence of Hatchway and Pipes, and scarce think the ruined spendthrift deserves their persevering and faithful attachment.

But the deep and fertile genius of Smollett afforded resources sufficient to make up for these deficiencies; and when the full weight has been allowed to Fielding's superiority of taste and expression, his northern contemporary will still be found fit to balance the scale with his great rival. If Fielding had superior taste, the palm of more brilliancy of genius, more inexhaustible richness of invention, must in justice be awarded to Smollett. In comparison with his sphere, that in which Fielding walked was limited; and compared with the wealthy profusion of varied character and incident which Smollett has scattered through his works,

there is a poverty of composition about his rival. Fielding's fame rests on a single *chef d'œuvre;* and the art and industry which produced *Tom Jones,* was unable to rise to equal excellence in *Amelia.* Though, therefore, we may justly prefer *Tom Jones* as the most masterly example of an artful and well-told novel, to any individual work of Smollett; yet *Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle,* and *Humphry Clinker,* do each of them far excel *Joseph Andrews* or *Amelia;* and, to descend still lower, *Jonathan Wild,* or *The Journey to the next World,* cannot be put into momentary comparison with *Sir Lancelot Greaves,* or *Ferdinand Count Fathom.*

Every successful novelist must be more or less a poet, even although he may never have written a line of verse. The quality of imagination is absolutely indispensable to him: his accurate power of examining and embodying human character and human passion, as well as the external face of nature, is not less essential; and the talent of describing well what he feels with acuteness, added to the above requisites, goes far to complete the poetic character. Smollett was, even in the ordinary sense, which limits the name to those who write verses, a poet of distinction; and, in this particular, superior to Fielding, who seldom aims at more than a slight translation from the classics.[1]

1 A judge, competent in the highest degree, has thus characterised Smollett's poetical compositions. "They have a portion of delicacy, not to be found in his novels; but they have not, like those prose fictions, the strength of a master's hand. Were he to live again, we might wish him to write more poetry, in the belief that his poetical talent would improve by exercise; but we should be glad that we had more

Accordingly, if he is surpassed by Fielding in moving pity, the northern novelist soars far above him in his powers of exciting terror. Fielding has no passages which approach in sublimity to the robber-scene in *Count Fathom;* or to the terrible description of a sea-engagement, in which Roderick Random sits chained and exposed upon the poop, without the power of motion or exertion, during the carnage of a tremendous engagement. Upon many other occasions, Smollett's descriptions ascend to the sublime; and, in general, there is an air of romance in his writings, which raises his narratives above the level and easy course of ordinary life. He was, like a preeminent poet of our own day, a searcher of dark bosoms, and loved to paint characters under the strong agitation of fierce and stormy passions. Hence misanthropes, gamblers, and duellists, are as common in his works, as robbers in those of Salvator Rosa, and are drawn, in most cases, with the same terrible truth and effect. To compare *Ferdinand Count Fathom* to the *Jonathan Wild* of Fielding, would be perhaps unfair to the latter author; yet, the works being composed on the same plan, (a very bad one, as we think,) we cannot help placing them by the side of each other; when it becomes at once obvious that the detestable Fathom is a living and existing miscreant, at whom we shrink as if from the presence of an incarnate fiend, while the villain of Fielding seems rather a

novels just as they are."—*Specimens of the British Poets, by* THOMAS CAMPBELL, vol. vi. The truth is, that in these very novels are expended many of the ingredients both of grave and humorous poetry.

cold personification of the abstract principle of evil, so far from being terrible, that notwithstanding the knowledge of the world argued in many passages of his adventures, we are compelled to acknowledge him absolutely tiresome.

It is, however, chiefly in his profusion, which amounts almost to prodigality, that we recognise the superior richness of Smollett's fancy. He never shows the least desire to make the most either of a character, or a situation, or an adventure, but throws them together with a carelessness which argues unlimited confidence in his own powers. Fielding pauses to explain the principles of his art, and to congratulate himself and his readers on the felicity with which he constructs his narrative, or makes his characters evolve themselves in its progress. These appeals to the reader's judgment, admirable as they are, have sometimes the fault of being diffuse, and always the great disadvantage, that they remind us we are perusing a work of fiction; and that the beings with whom we have been conversant during the perusal, are but a set of evanescent phantoms, conjured up by a magician for our amusement. Smollett seldom holds communication with his readers in his own person. He manages his delightful puppet-show without thrusting his head beyond the curtain, like Gines de Passamont, to explain what he is doing; and hence, besides that our attention to the story remains unbroken, we are sure that the author, fully confident in the abundance of his materials, has no occasion to eke them out with extrinsic matter.

Smollett's sea-characters have been deservedly

considered as inimitable; and the power with which he has diversified them, in so many instances, distinguishing the individual features of each honest tar, while each possesses a full proportion of professional manners and habits of thinking, is a most absolute proof of the richness of fancy with which the author was gifted, and which we have noticed as his chief advantage over Fielding. Bowling, Trunnion, Hatchway, Pipes, and Crowe, are all men of the same class, habits, and tone of thinking, yet so completely differenced by their separate and individual characters, that we at once acknowledge them as distinct persons, while we see and allow that every one of them belongs to the old English navy. These striking portraits have now the merit which is cherished by antiquaries—they preserve the memory of the school of Benbow and Boscawen, whose manners are now banished from the quarterdeck to the forecastle. The naval officers of the present day, the splendour of whose actions has thrown into shadow the exploits of a thousand years, do not now affect the manners of foremast-men, and have shown how admirably well their duty can be discharged without any particular attachment to tobacco or flip, or the decided preference of a check shirt over a linen one.[1] But these, when memory carries them back thirty or forty years, must remember many a weather-beaten

[1] [" The strong picture of the discomforts of his naval life, which he afterwards drew, is said to have attracted considerable attention to the internal economy of our ships of war, and to have occasioned the commencement of some salutary reformations."—CAMPBELL.]

veteran, whose appearance, language, and sentiments free Smollett from the charge of extravagance in his characteristic sketches of British seamen of the last century.

In the comic part of their writings, we have already said, Fielding is preeminent in grave irony, a Cervantic species of pleasantry, in which Smollett is not equally successful. On the other hand, the Scotchman, notwithstanding the general opinion denies that quality to his countrymen, excels in broad and ludicrous humour. His fancy seems to run riot in accumulating ridiculous circumstances one upon another, to the utter destruction of all power of gravity; and perhaps no books ever written have excited such peals of inextinguishable laughter as those of Smollett. The descriptions which affect us thus powerfully, border sometimes upon what is called farce or caricature; but if it be the highest praise of pathetic composition that it draws forth tears, why should it not be esteemed the greatest excellence of the ludicrous that it compels laughter? the one tribute is at least as genuine an expression of natural feeling as the other; and he who can read the calamitous career of Trunnion and Hatchway, when run away with by their mettled steeds, or the inimitable absurdities of the Feast of the Ancients, without a good hearty burst of honest laughter, must be well qualified to look sad and gentlemanlike with Lord Chesterfield and Master Stephen.

Upon the whole, the genius of Smollett may be said to resemble that of Rubens. His pictures are often deficient in grace; sometimes coarse, and

even vulgar in conception; deficient in keeping, and in the due subordination of parts to each other; and intimating too much carelessness on the part of the artist. But these faults are redeemed by such richness and brilliancy of colours; such a profusion of imagination—now bodying forth the grand and terrible—now the natural, the easy, and the ludicrous; there is so much of life, action, and bustle, in every group he has painted; so much force and individuality of character,—that we readily grant to Smollett an equal rank with his great rival Fielding, while we place both far above any of their successors in the same line of fictitious composition.

Abbotsford, 1*st June*, 1821.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

LETTER FROM TOBIAS SMOLLETT TO THE HON. ALEXANDER HUME CAMPBELL.

THIS Letter exists in a rough draught, sent by the author to his friend Mr MacKercher. The consequences are not known, but the letter appeared in the *European Magazine*, vol. v., from Smollett's handwriting.

" I have waited several days in hope of receiving from you an acknowledgment touching those harsh, unjustifiable, (and, let me add,) unmannerly expressions, which you annexed to my name, in the Court of King's Bench, when you opened the cause depending between me and Peter Gordon; and, as I do not find that you have discovered the least inclination to retract what you said to my prejudice, I have taken this method to refresh your memory, and to demand such satisfaction as a gentleman, injured as I am, has a right to claim.

" The business of a counsellor is, I apprehend, to investigate the truth in behalf of his client; but surely he has no privilege to blacken and asperse the character of the other party, without any regard to veracity or decorum. That you assumed this unwarrantable privilege in commenting upon your brief, I believe you will not pretend to deny, when I remind you of those peculiar flowers of elocution which you poured forth on that notable occasion. First of all, in order to inspire the court with horror and contempt for the defendant, you gave the jury to understand that you did not know this Dr Smollett; and, indeed, his character appeared in such a light, from the facts contained in your brief, that you never should desire to know him. I should be glad to learn of what consequence it could be to the cause whether you did or did not know the defendant, or whether you had or had not an inclination to be acquainted with him? Sir, this was

a pitiful personality, calculated to depreciate the character of a gentleman to whom you was a stranger, merely to gratify the rancour and malice of an abandoned fellow who had feed you to speak in his cause. Did I ever seek your acquaintance, or court your protection? I had been informed, indeed, that you was a lawyer of some reputation, and, when the suit commenced, would have retained you for that reason, had I not been anticipated by the plaintiff; but, far from coveting your acquaintance, I never dreamed of exchanging a word with you on that or any other subject: you might therefore have spared your invidious declaration, until I had put it in your power to mortify me with a repulse, which, upon my honour, would never have been the case, were you a much greater man than you really are. Yet this was not the only expedient you used to prepossess the jury against me. You was hardy enough to represent me as a person devoid of all humanity and remorse; as a barbarous ruffian, who, in a cowardly manner, had, with two associates as barbarous as myself, called a peaceable gentleman out of his lodgings, and assaulted him in the dark, with an intent to murder. Such an horrid imputation, publicly fixed upon a person whose innocence you could hardly miss to know, is an outrage, for which, I believe, I might find reparation from the law itself, notwithstanding your artful manner of qualifying the expression by saying, *provided the facts can be proved.* This low subterfuge may, for aught I know, screen you from a prosecution at law, but can never acquit you in that court which every man of honour holds in his own breast. I say, you must have known my innocence from the weakness of the evidence which you produced, and with which you either was, or ought to have been previously acquainted, as well as from my general character, and that of my antagonist, which it was your duty to have learned. I will venture to say, you did know my character, and in your heart believed me incapable of such brutality as you laid to my charge. Surely I do not overrate my own importance in affirming, that I am not so obscure in life as to have escaped the notice of Mr Hume Campbell; and I will be bold enough to challenge him and the whole world to prove one instance in which my integrity was called, or at least left, in question. Have not I, therefore, reason to suppose that, in spite of your internal conviction, you undertook the cause of a wretch, whose ingratitude, villany, and rancour, are, I firmly believe, without example in this kingdom; that you magnified a slight correction bestowed by his benefactor, in consequence of the most insolent provocation, into a deliberate and malicious scheme

of assassination; and endeavoured, with all the virulence of defamation, to destroy the character, and even the life, of an injured person, who, as well as yourself, is a gentleman by birth, education, and profession? In favour of whom, and in consequence of what, was all this zeal manifested, all this slander exhausted, and all this scurrility discharged? Your client, whom you dignified with the title of Esquire, and endeavoured to raise to the same footing with one in point of station and character, you knew to be an abject miscreant, whom my compassion and humanity had lifted from the most deplorable scenes of distress; whom I had saved from imprisonment and ruin; whom I had clothed and fed for a series of years; whom I had occasionally assisted with my purse, credit, and influence. You knew, or ought to have known, that, after having received a thousand marks of my benevolence, and prevailed upon me to indorse notes for the support of his credit, he withdrew himself into the verge of the court, and took up his habitation in a paltry alehouse, where he not only set me and the rest of his creditors at defiance, but provoked me by scurrilous and insolent letters and messages, to chastise him in such a manner as gave him a handle for this prosecution, in which you signalized yourself as his champion for a very honourable consideration. There is something so palpably ungrateful, perfidious, and indeed diabolical, in the conduct of the prosecutor, that, even in these degenerate days, I wonder how he could find an attorney to appear in his behalf. *O tempora! O mores!* After having thus sounded the trumpet of obloquy in your preamble, and tortured every circumstance of the plaintiff's evidence to my detriment and dishonour, you attempted to subject me to the ridicule of the Court, by asking a question of my first witness, which had no more relation to the cause, than if you had desired to know the name of his grandmother. What title had you to ask of a tradesman, if he knew me to be an author? What affinity had this question with the circumstances of the assault? Was not this foreign to the purpose? Was it not impertinent, and proposed with a view to put me out of countenance, and to raise the laugh of the spectators at my expense? There, indeed, you was disappointed, as you frequently are in those little digressive efforts by which you make yourself remarkable. Though I do not pretend to possess that superlative degree of effrontery by which some people make a figure at the bar, I have assurance enough to stand the mention of my works without blushing, especially when I despise the taste, and scorn the principles, of him who would turn them to my disgrace. You succeeded, however, in

one particular; I mean, in raising the indignation of my witness; of which you took all imaginable advantage, puzzling, perplexing, and brow-beating him with such artifice, eagerness, and insult, as overwhelmed him with confusion, and had wellnigh deprived me of the benefit of his evidence. Luckily for me, the next gentleman who was called confirmed what the other had swore, and proved to the satisfaction of the judge and jury, and even to your own conviction, that this terrible deliberate assassination was no more than a simple blow given to a rascal after repeated provocation, and that of the most flagrant kind; that no advantage was taken in point of weapons; and that two drabs, whom they had picked up for the purpose, had affirmed upon oath a downright falsehood, with a view to blast my reputation. You yourself was so conscious of this palpable detection, that you endeavoured to excuse them by a forced explanation, which, you may depend upon it, shall not screen them from a prosecution for perjury. I will not say, that this was like patronising a couple of gipsies who had forsworn themselves, consequently forfeited all title to the countenance, or indeed forbearance of the Court; but this I will say, that your tenderness for them was of a piece with your whole behaviour to me, which I think was equally insolent and unjust; for, granting that you had really supposed me guilty of an intended assassination before the trial began, you saw me in the course of evidence acquitted of that suspicion, and heard the judge insist upon my innocence in his charge to the jury, who brought in their verdict accordingly. Then, sir, you ought in common justice to have owned yourself mistaken, or to have taken some other opportunity of expressing your concern for what you had said to my disadvantage; though even such an acknowledgment would not have been a sufficient reparation, because, before my witnesses were called, many persons left the court with impressions to my prejudice, conceived from the calumnies which they heard you espouse and encourage. On the whole, you opened the trial with such hyperbolical impetuosity, and conducted it with such particular bitterness and rancour, that everybody perceived you was more than ordinarily interested; and I could not divine the mysterious bond of union that attached you to Peter Gordon, Esq., until you furnished me with a key to the whole secret, by that strong emphasis with which you pronounced the words—*Ferdinand Count Fathom*. Then I discovered the source of your good-will towards me, which is no other than the history of a lawsuit inserted in that performance, where the author takes occasion to observe, that the counsel behaved like

men of consummate abilities in their profession; exerting themselves with equal industry, eloquence, and erudition, in their endeavours to perplex the truth, brow-beat the evidence, puzzle the judge, and mislead the jury. Did any part of this character come home to your own conscience? or did you resent it as a sarcasm levelled at the whole bench without distinction? I take it for granted, that this must have been the origin of your enmity to me; because I can recollect no other circumstance in my conduct, by which I could incur the displeasure of a man whom I scarce knew by sight, and with whom I never had the least dispute, or indeed concern. If this was the case, you pay a very scurvy compliment to your own integrity, by fathering a character which is not applicable to any honest man, and give the world a handle to believe, that our courts of justice stand greatly in need of reformation. Indeed, the petulance, license, and buffoonery of some lawyers in the exercise of their function, is a reproach upon decency, and a scandal to the nation; and it is surprising that the Judge, who represents his Majesty's person, should suffer such insults upon the dignity of the place. But whatever liberties of this kind are granted to counsel, no sort of freedom, it seems, must be allowed to the evidence, who, by the by, are of much more consequence to the cause. You will take upon you to divert the audience at the expense of a witness, by impertinent allusions to some parts of his private character and affairs; but if he pretends to retort the joke, you insult, abuse, and bellow against him, as an impudent fellow, who fails in his respect to the Court. It was in this manner you behaved to my first witness, whom you first provoked into a passion by your injurious insinuations; then you took an advantage of the confusion which you had entailed upon him; and, lastly, you insulted him, as a person who had shuffled in his evidence. This might have been an irreparable injury to the character of a tradesman, had not he been luckily known to the whole jury, and many other persons in Court, as a man of unquestionable probity and credit. Sir, a witness has as good a title as you have to the protection of the Court; and ought to have more, because evidence is absolutely necessary for the investigation of truth; whereas, the aim of a lawyer is often to involve it in doubt and obscurity. Is it for this purpose you so frequently deviate from the point, and endeavour to raise the mirth of the audience with flat jokes and insipid similes? or have you really so miserably mistaken your own talents, as to set up for the character of a man of humour? For my own part, were I disposed to be merry, I should never desire a more

pregnant subject of ridicule, than your own appearance and behaviour; but, as I am at present in a very serious mood, I shall content myself with demanding adequate reparation for the injurious treatment I have received at your hands; otherwise, I will in four days put this letter in the press, and you shall hear in another manner—not from a ruffian and an assassin—but from an injured gentleman, who is not ashamed of subscribing himself," &c.

No. II.

CONTROVERSY WITH SHEBBEARE AND GRAINGER.

[Among others, he incurred at this time the resentment of Dr Shebbeare, a well-known political and miscellaneous writer, who had been chastised in the *Review*, for his insolent and seditious publications; and severely punished by the government for his arrogance and abuse, in stigmatizing some great names with all the virulence of censure, and even assailing the throne itself, with oblique insinuation and ironical satire. The incensed author suspected Smollett, and retaliated in a pamphlet, entitled *The Occasional Critic, or the Decrees of the Scots Tribunal in the Critical Review rejudged*, 8vo, 1757, written with all the presumption of Dennis without his learning, with all his rage without his integrity.

Although the "Occasional Critic" in many instances stumbled on the truth, the whole animation of the performance arose from the vivacity and virulence with which the enraged writer maintained that the authors of the *Critical Review* were Scots scrubs, and rascals, barbers, tailors, apothecaries, and surgeons' mates, who understood neither Greek, Latin, French, nor English, nor any other language; and that Scotland never produced any one man of genius, learning, or integrity.

The acrimony of Dr Shebbeare's retaliation was greater than Smollett's patience, which was not his most shining virtue, could bear, without resistance or reply; and it immediately drew from him, or one of his literary associates, the following observations:

"Whatever regard we may have for our fellow-subjects in North Britain, and surely we do regard them, not only as our brethren, but also as a people distinguished by their learning and capacity, we have no call to enter the lists as their champions, against an antagonist whom they themselves would hardly deign to oppose.

"We cannot help, however, taking this opportunity of declaring, that of five persons concerned in writing the *Critical Review*, one only is a native of Scotland; so that our hypercritic's national rancour against that kingdom seems to have mistaken its object; unless he levelled the whole at one member of our society, whom indeed he has reviled, bespattered, and belied with all the venom of low, invidious malice, and all the filth of vulgar abuse. These attacks, however, we forgive, as the natural effect of resentment. That person has occasionally checked and chastised him, as an ignorant and presumptuous quack in politics, an enemy to his king and country, and a desperate incendiary, who, by misrepresenting facts, and aspersing characters, endeavoured to raise a ferment in the nation, at a time when a concurrence of unfortunate incidents had produced a spirit of discontent among the people."—*Critical Review*, 1757.

He had no sooner repelled the illiberal abuse of a writer, whose injustice he reprobated, and whose resentment he despised, than he was thrown into a more vexatious, and less creditable dispute with Dr Grainger, a man of genius, and a poet, who suspected him to be the writer of the article in the *Critical Review*, in which his "Translation of Tibullus" had been treated with unjustifiable severity. Whether Dr Grainger's suspicions were well or ill founded, he thought his translation had been criticised in the *Review* with malignity, and published an angry "Letter to Tobias Smollett, M.D., occasioned by his Criticism upon a late Translation of Tibullus," 8vo, 1758; in which, after refuting the criticisms of the reviewer, he proves, by examples principally taken from the article on his own work, that the authors of the *Critical Review* had broken, in every particular, their promises solemnly made to the public, in the plan of their journal: mentions Smollett in contemptuous terms, and indulges himself in some ludicrous reflections on the unlucky diminutive of his Christian name.

These personal reflections and pleasantries, which mingled in the controversy between the poet and the critic, who mutually respected each other's talents and character, were not forgotten when Dr Grainger's "Letter" fell under the animadversions of Smollett, or one of his associates, in the *Critical Review*, who, in ridiculing that playful species of vengeance, was guilty of injustice, if he meant to insinuate that his antagonist could be classed among the dunces of the age.

The writer of the article observes, that "Dr Grainger had

found in Dr Smollett's Christian name *Tobias*, and its diminutive *Toby*, a very extraordinary fund of humour and ridicule; but that this species of wit, however entertaining, was not new, for that others had played on the cognomen with as much dexterity as he had on the prenomen; that *Smollett* had been facetiously converted, by that stupendous genius Dr Hill, into *Small-head* and *Small-wit*; that the same happy thought had struck the dunces of a former age, who had not only punned successfully on the name of *Alexander Pope*, but had even written a poem against him, entitled *Sawney*. "Think not, reader," he adds, "that we presume to compare Dr Smollett, as a writer, with Mr Pope; we are sensible of the infinite disparity; but in one respect their fate is similar; they have both been abused, belied, and accused of ignorance, malice, and want of genius, by the confessed dunces of the age, at a time when their works were read and approved, at least as much as any other English contemporary author."

Men of letters, it has often been remarked, are more easily provoked, and more vindictive when provoked, than other men. Their quarrels, when they are enraged, are commonly more violent, and better known, than the ordinary competitions of interest in which other men indulge themselves; as they originate in the jealousy of their own fame, or in the envy of that of their brethren, and are circulated in the popular vehicles of wit and satire. The controversy between Smollett and Dr Grainger, it is probable, did not originate in envy, with which the mind of Smollett was not tainted, nor in any personal animosity against his amiable and ingenious countryman, but in a systematic opposition to the authors of the "*Monthly Review*," in which Dr Grainger was known to be concerned, who had an interest in decrying the qualifications of his colleagues, and of impeaching the decrees of the tribunal in which he presided.

Of the unjust suspicions which his concern in the *Critical Review* excited in the breasts of Mr Home, the author of the tragedy of "Douglas," Dr Wilkie, author of "The Epigoniad," and some other writers of his own country, whose talents and characters he respected, he complains in a letter to Dr Moore, in the year 1758, in which is the following paragraph:—

"I have for some time done very little in the *Critical Review*. The remarks upon Home's tragedy I never saw until they were in print; and yet I have not read one line of the 'Epigoniad.' I am told the work has merit; and I am truly sorry that it should have been so roughly handled. Notwithstanding the censures

that have been so freely bestowed upon these and other productions of our country, the authors of the *Critical Review* have been insulted and abused as a *Scots Tribunal.*"

Besides these, many other disputes arose with different writers, who considered themselves injured by the severity of his criticisms. Seldom a month passed without some complaints of his injustice and inhumanity towards bad writers, or their employers, and those not often expressed in the most decent terms. The public, to whom they appealed, refused their sympathy, and retorted the charge, with disgrace, on his accusers; who, being authors without talents, were themselves impostors, who defrauded the public, and had little reason to expect his indulgence. But whatever reason he had to complain of the personal abuse he suffered from detected dulness and mortified vanity, he afterwards found, that the revenge of an author was nothing compared to the rancour of the politician, and the resentment of little men placed in great stations.—ANDERSON's *Life of Smollett*, pp. 57, 62.]

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

This author, distinguished in the eighteenth century, survived till the present was considerably advanced, interesting to the public, as well as to private society, not only on account of his own claims to distinction, but as the last of that constellation of genius which the predominating spirit of Johnson had assembled about him, and in which he presided a stern Aristarchus. Cumberland's character and writings are associated with those of Goldsmith, of Burke, of Percy, of Reynolds, names which sound in our ears as those of English classics. He was his own biographer; and from his Memoirs we are enabled to trace a brief sketch of his life and labours, as also of his temper and character;[1] on which latter subject we have the evidence of contemporaries, and perhaps some recollections of our own.

Richard Cumberland boasted himself, with honest pride, the descendant of parents respectable for their station, eminent in learning, and no less for worth and piety. The celebrated Richard

[1] ["Memoirs of Richard Cumberland, written by himself, containing an Account of his Life and Writings, interspersed with Anecdotes and Characters of several of the most distinguished persons of his time, with whom he has had intercourse and connexion. London: 1806, 4to.; 1807, 2 vols. 8vo."]

Bentley was his maternal grandfather, a name dreaded as well as respected in literature, and which his descendant, on several occasions, protected with filial respect against those, who continued over his grave the insults which he had received from the wits of Queen Anne's reign. This eminent scholar had one son, the well-known author of *The Wishes*, and two daughters. The second, Joanna, the Phœbe of Byron's pastoral, married Denison Cumberland, son of an arch-deacon, and grandson of Richard Cumberland, Bishop of Peterborough.[1] Though possessed of some in-

[1] The following amiable picture of Richard Cumberland occurs in the lately published and very interesting Memoirs of Samuel Pepys:—

"*18th March*, 1667.—Comes my old friend Mr Richard Cumberland to see me, being newly come to town, whom I have not seen almost, if not quite, these seven years. In a plain country parson's dress. I could not spend much time with him, but prayed him to come with his brother, who was with him, to dine with me to-day; which he did do: and I had a great deal of his good company; and a most excellent person he is as any I know, and one that I am sorry should be lost and buried in a little country town, and would be glad to remove him thence; and the truth is, if he would accept of my sister's fortune, I should give L.100 more with him than to a man able to settle her four times as much as I fear he is able to do."

It is impossible to suppress a smile at the manner in which the candid journalist describes the brother-in-law whom he finally adopted, not without a glance of regret towards Cumberland:—

"*February 7th*, 1667-8.—Met my cosen Roger again, and Mr Jackson, who is a plain young man, handsome enough for her, one of no education nor discourse, but of few words, and one altogether that, I think, will please me well enough. My cosen had got me to give the odd sixth L.100 presently, which I intended to keep to the birth of the first child: and let it go

dependence, he became Rector of Stanwick, at the instance of his father-in-law, Dr Bentley, and, in course of time, Bishop of Clonfert, and was afterwards translated to the see of Kilmore.

Richard Cumberland, the subject of this memoir, was the second child of this marriage, the eldest being Joanna, a daughter. He was born on the 19th of February, 1732; and, as he naturally delights to record with precision, in an apartment called the Judge's Chamber, of the Master's Lodge of Trinity College, then occupied by his celebrated maternal grandfather—*inter sylvas Academi.* With equal minuteness the grandson of the learned Bentley goes through the course of his earlier studies, and registers his progress under Kinsman of St Edmondsbury, afterwards at Westminster, and finally at Cambridge; in all which seminaries of classical erudition, he highly distinguished himself. At college he endangered his health by the severity with which he followed his studies, obtained his Bachelor's degree with honour, and passed with triumph a peculiarly difficult examination; the result of which was his being elected to a Fellowship.

Amid his classical pursuits, the cultivation of English letters was not neglected, and Cumberland became the author of many poems of considerable merit. It may be observed, however, that he seldom seems to have struck out an original

—I shall be eased of the care. So there parted, my mind pretty well satisfied with this plain fellow for my sister; though I shall, I see, have no pleasure nor content in him, as if he had been a man of reading and parts, like Cumberland." —Pepys' *Diary*, vol. ii., pp. 29, and 189.

path for himself, but rather wrote because others had written successfully, and in the manner of which they had set an example, than from the strong impulse of that inward fire, which makes or forces a way for its own coruscations, without respect to the course of others. Thus Cumberland wrote an Elegy in a Churchyard on Saint Mark's Eve, because Gray had, with general applause, published an Elegy in a Country Churchyard. He composed a drama on the subject of Elfrida, and with a chorus, in imitation of Mason; he imitated Hammond, and he imitated Spenser, and seems to display a mind full of information and activity, abounding with the natural desire of distinction, but which had not yet attained sufficient confidence in its own resources, to attempt a road to eminence of his own discovery; and this is a defect from which none of his compositions are perhaps entirely free.

Mr Cumberland's original destiny was to have walked the respectable and retired path by which his ancestors had ascended to church dignity; and there is every reason to believe, that, as he was their equal in worth and learning, his success in life might have been the same as theirs. But a temptation, difficult to be resisted, turned him from the study of divinity to that of politics.

The Rev. Mr Cumberland, father of the poet, had it in his power to render some important political services to the Marquis of Halifax, then distinguished as a public character; and in recompense or acknowledgment of this, young Richard was withdrawn from the groves of Cam, and the tranquil

pursuit of a learned profession, to attend the noble lord in the advantageous and confidential situation of private secretary. Amidst much circumlocution and moral reflection, which Cumberland bestows on this promotion and change of pursuit, the reader may fairly infer, that though he discharged with regularity the ostensible duties of his office, it was not suited to him; nor did he give the full satisfaction which perhaps he might have done, had a raw academician, his head full, as he says, of Greek and Latin, and little acquainted with the affairs of the existing world, been in the first place introduced for a time to busy life as a spectator, ere called to take an active part in it as a duty. His situation, however, led him into the best society, and ensured liberal favour and patronage (so far as praise and recommendation went) to the efforts of his muse. In particular, his connexion with Lord Halifax introduced our author to Bubb Doddington, afterwards Lord Melcombe, of Diary memory, who affected the character of Mecænas, and was in reality an accomplished man.

It was under the joint auspices of Lords Halifax and Melcombe, that Cumberland executed what he has entitled his first legitimate drama, *The Banishment of Cicero*,—an unhappy subject, the deficiencies of which are not redeemed by much powerful writing. This tragedy was recommended to Garrick by the two noble patrons of Cumberland; but, in despite of his deference for great names and high authorities, the manager would not venture on so unpromising a subject of representation. *The Banishment of Cicero* was published by the author,

who frankly admits, that in doing so he printed Garrick's vindication.

About this time, as an earnest of future favours, Cumberland obtained, through the influence of Lord Halifax, the office of crown-agent for the province of Nova Scotia, and conceived his fortune sufficiently advanced in the world to settle himself by marriage. In 1759, therefore, he united himself to Elizabeth, only daughter of George Ridge, of Kilmerton, by Miss Brooke, a niece of Cumberland's grandfather, Bentley. Mrs Cumberland was accomplished and beautiful, and the path of promotion appeared to brighten before the happy bridegroom.

Lord Bute's star was now rising fast in the political horizon, and both the Marquis of Halifax and the versatile Bubb Doddington had determined to worship the influence of this short-lived luminary. The latter obtained a British peerage, a barren honour, which only entitled him to walk in the procession at the coronation, and the former had the Lieutenancy of Ireland. The celebrated Single-Speech Hamilton held the post of Chief Secretary to the Lord-lieutenant, while Cumberland, not to his perfect content, was obliged to confine himself to the secondary department of Ulster Secretary. There was wisdom, perhaps, in the selection, though it would have been unreasonable to expect the disappointed private secretary to concur in that opinion. No one ever doubted the acute political and practical talents of William Gerard Hamilton, while Cumberland possessed, perhaps, too much of the poetical temperament to

rival him as a man of business. A vivid imagination, eager on its own schemes, and unapt to be stirred by matter of duller import; a sanguine temper, to which hopes too often seem as certainties, joined to a certain portion both of self-opinion and self-will, although they are delightful, considered as the attributes of an intimate friend, are inconvenient ingredients in the character of a dependent, whose duty lies in the paths of ordinary business. Besides, Mr D'Israeli has produced the following curious evidence, to show that Cumberland's habits were not those which fit a man for ordinary affairs: "A friend who was in office with the late Mr Cumberland, assures me that he was so intractable to the forms of business, and so easily induced to do more or to do less than he ought, that he was compelled to perform the official business of this literary man, to free himself from his annoyance; and yet Cumberland could not be reproached with any deficiency in a knowledge of the human character, which he was always touching with a caustic pleasantry."[1]

Cumberland, however, rendered his principal some effectual service, even in the most worldly application of the phrase—he discovered a number of lapsed patents, the renewal of which the Lord-lieutenant found a convenient fund of influence; but the Ulster Secretary had no other reward than the empty offer of a baronetcy, which he wisely declined. He was gratified, however, though less directly, by the promotion of his father to the see

[1] The Literary Character illustrated, 1822, vol. ii., p. 106.

of Clonfert in Ireland. The new prelate shifted his residence to that kingdom, where, during his subsequent life, his son, with pious duty, spent some considerable part of every year in attendance on his declining age.

Lord Halifax, on his return to England, obtained the seals of Secretary of State, and Cumberland, a candidate for the office of Under Secretary, received the cold answer from his patron, that "he was not fit for every situation;" a reason scarce rendered more palatable by the special addition, that he did not possess the necessary fluency in the French tongue. Sedgewick, the successful competitor, vacated a situation at the Board of Trade, called Clerk of Reports, and Cumberland became desirous to hold it in his room. As this was in the gift of Lord Hillsborough, the proposal to apply for it was in a manner withdrawing from the patronage of Lord Halifax, who seems to have considered it as such, and there ensued some coldness betwixt the minister and his late private secretary. On looking at these events, we can see that Cumberland was probably no good man of business, as it is called, certainly no good courtier; for, holding such a confidential situation with Lord Halifax, he must otherwise have rendered himself either too useful, or too agreeable, to be easily parted with.

An attempt of Cumberland's to fill up the poetical part of an English opera, incurred the jealousy of Bickerstaff, the author of *Love in a Village*, then in possession of that department of dramatic composition. The piece, called the *Summer's Tale*, succeeded in such a degree, as induced the rival

writer to vent his indignation in every species of abuse against the author and the drama. In a much better spirit, Cumberland ascribed Bickerstaff's hostility to an anxious apprehension for his interest, and generously intimated his intention to interfere no farther with him as a writer of operas. The dispute led to important consequences; for Smith, well known by the deserved appellation of Gentleman Smith, then of Covent-Garden, turned the author's dramatic genius into a better channel, by strongly recommending to him to attempt the legitimate drama. By this encouragement, Mr Cumberland was induced to commence his dramatic career, which he often pursued with success, and almost always with such indefatigable industry, as has no parallel in our theatrical history.

The Brothers was the first fruit of this ample harvest. It was received with applause, and is still on the stock-list of acting plays. The sudden assumption of spirit by Sir Benjamin Dove, like Luke's change from servility to insolence, is one of those incidents which always tell well upon the spectator. The author acknowledges his obligations to Fletcher's *Little French Lawyer;* but the comedy is brought to bear on a point so different, that little is in this instance detracted from its merit.

But the *West Indian,* which succeeded in the following year, raised its author much higher in the class of dramatic writers of the period, and—had Sheridan not been—must have placed Cumberland decidedly at the head of the list. It is a classical comedy; the dialogue spirited and ele-

gant; the characters well conceived, and presenting bold features, though still within the line of probability; and the plot regularly conducted, and happily extricated. The character of Major O'Flaherty, those who have seen it represented by Jack Johnstone[1] will always consider as one of the most efficient in the British drama. It could only have been drawn by one who, like Cumberland, had enjoyed repeated opportunities of forming a true estimate of the Irish gentleman; and the Austrian cockade in his hat, might serve to remind the British administration, that they had sacrificed the services of this noble and martial race to unjust restrictions and political prejudices. The character of Major O'Flaherty may have had the additional merit of suggesting that of Sir Lucius O'Trigger; but the latter is a companion, not a copy, of Cumberland's portrait.

Garrick, reconciled with the author by a happy touch of praise in the prologue to *The Brothers*,

[1] Commonly called Irish Johnstone. The judgment displayed by this excellent actor, in his by-play, as it is called, was peculiarly exquisite. When he intercepts the cordial designed for Lady Rusport, and which her attendant asserts was only good for ladies' complaints, the quiet and sly expression of surprise, admirably subdued by good-breeding, and by the respect of a man of gallantry even to the foibles of the fair sex, and the dry mode in which he pronounced that the potion was very "good for some gentlemen's complaints too," intimate at once the quality of her ladyship's composing draught, but in a manner accurately consistent with the perfect politeness of the discoverer, enjoying the jest himself, yet anxious to avoid the most distant appearance of insulting or ridiculing the lady's frailty. Go thy ways, old Jack! we shall hardly see thy like in thy range of character.

contributed an epilogue, and Tom King supported the character of Belcour with that elastic energy, which gave reality to all the freaks of a child of the sun, whose benevolence seems as instinctive as his passions.

The *Fashionable Lover*, which followed the *West Indian*, was an addition to Cumberland's reputation. There was the same elegance of dialogue, but much less of the *vis comica*. The scenes hang heavy on the stage, and the character of Colin M'Leod, the honest Scotch servant, not being drawn from nature, has little, excepting tameness, to distinguish it from the Gibbies and Sawnies which had hitherto possession of the stage, as the popular representatives of the Scottish nation. The author himself is, doubtless, of a different opinion, and labours hard to place his *Fashionable Lovers* by the side of the *West Indian*, in point of merit; but the critic cannot avoid assenting to the judgment of the audience. The *Choleric Man*[1] was next acted, and was well received, though now forgotten; and other dramatic sketches, of minor importance, were given by Cumberland to the public, before the production of his *Battle of Hastings*, a tragedy, in which the language, often uncommonly striking, has more merit than the characters

[1] [" Cumberland is so distressed with abuse about his play, that he has solicited Goldsmith to *take him off the rack of the newspapers*." Johnson to Mrs Thrale.—" The play in question was the *Choleric Man*, which Cumberland afterwards published with a *Dedication to Detraction*. He was very sensitive to such attacks, as Sheridan more than hints in the character of Sir Fretful Plagiary."—Croker, vol. ii , p. 197.]

or the plot. The latter has the inconvenient fault of being inconsistent with history, which at once affords a hold to every critic of the most ordinary degree of information. It was successful, however, Henderson performing the principal character. Bickerstaff being off the stage, our author also wrote *Calypso*, and another opera, with the view of serving a meritorious young composer, named Butler.

Neither did these dramatic labours entirely occupy Cumberland's time. He found leisure to defend the memory of his grandfather, Bentley, in a controversy with Lowth, and to plead the cause of the unhappy Daniel Perreau, over whose fate hangs a veil so mysterious.[1] Cumberland drew up his address to the jury, an elegant and affecting piece of composition, which had much effect on the audience in general, though it failed in moving those who had the fate of the accused in their hands.

The satisfaction which the author must have derived from the success of his various dramatic labours, seems to have been embittered by the criticisms to which, whether just or invidious, all authors, but especially those who write for the theatre, are exposed. He acknowledges that he gave too much attention to the calumnies and abuse of the public press, and tells us, that Garrick used to call him the man without a skin. Unquestionably, toughness of hide is necessary on such occa-

1 [Robert and Daniel Perreau, twin-brothers, were executed in January, 1776, for the alleged forgery of a bond.]

sions ; but, on the whole, it will be found that they who give but slight attention to such poisoned arrows, experience least pain from their venom.

There was, indeed, in Cumberland's situation, enough to console him for greater mortifications than malevolent criticism ought to have had power to inflict. He was happy in his family, consisting of four sons and two daughters. All the former entered the King's service; the first and third as soldiers, the second and fourth in the navy. Besides these domestic blessings, Cumberland stood in the first ranks of literature, and, as a matter of course, in the first rank in society, to which, in England, successful literature is a ready passport. His habits and manners qualified him for enjoying this distinguished situation, and his fortune, including the profits of his office, and his literary revenues, seems not to have been inadequate to his maintaining his ground in society. It was shortly after improved by Lord George Germain, afterwards Lord Sackville, who promoted him in the handsomest manner to the situation of Secretary to the Board of Trade, at which he had hitherto held a subordinate situation.

A distant relation also, Decimus Reynolds, constituted Mr Cumberland heir to a considerable property, and placed his will in the hands of his intended successor, in order that he might not be tempted to alter it at a future period. Cumberland was too honourably minded to accept of it, otherwise than as a deposit to be called back at the testator's pleasure. After the course of several

years, Mr Reynolds resumed it accordingly. Another remarkable disappointment had in the meanwhile befallen, which, while it closed his farther progress in political life, gave a blow to his private fortune which it never seems to have recovered, and, in the author's own words, "very strongly contrasted and changed the complexion of his latter days from that of the preceding ones."

In the year 1780, hopes were entertained of detaching Spain from the hostile confederacy by which Britain was all but overwhelmed. That kingdom could not but dread the example held out by the North Americans to their own colonies. It was supposed possible to open a negotiation with the minister, Florida Blanca, and Richard Cumberland was the agent privately intrusted with conducting this political intrigue. He was to proceed in a frigate to Lisbon, under pretence of a voyage for health or pleasure; and either to go on to Madrid, or to return to Britain, as he should be advised, after communicating with the Abbé Hussey, chaplain to his Catholic Majesty, the secret agent in this important affair. Mrs Cumberland and her daughters accompanied him on this expedition. On the voyage, the envoy had an opportunity, precious to an author and dramatist, of seeing British courage displayed on its own proper element, by an action betwixt the Milford and a French frigate, in which the latter was captured. He celebrated this action in a very spirited sea-song, which we remember popular some years afterwards.

There was one point of the utmost consequence in the proposed treaty, a point which always has been so in negotiations with Spain, and which will again become so whenever she shall regain her place in the European republic. This point respects Gibraltar. There is little doubt that the temptation of recovering this important fortress was the bait which drew the Spanish nation into the American war; and could this fortress have been ceded to its natural possessor, mere regard to the Family Compact would not have opposed any insurmountable obstacle to a separate peace with England. But the hearts of the English people were as unalterably fixed on retaining this badge of conquest, as those of the Spaniards upon regaining it; and in truth its surrender must have been generally regarded at home and abroad as a dereliction of national honour, and a confession of national weakness. Mr Cumberland was therefore instructed not to proceed to Madrid, until he should learn from the Abbé Hussey whether the cession of this important fortress was, or was not, to be made, on the part of Spain, the basis of the proposed negotiation. In the former event, the secret envoy of England was not to advance to Madrid; but, on the contrary, to return to Britain. It was to ascertain this point that Hussey went to Madrid; but unhappily his letters to Cumberland, who remained at Lisbon, while they encouraged him to try the event of a negotiation, being desirous perhaps, on his own account, that the negotiations should not be broken off, gave him no assurances whatever upon the point by which his motions

were to be regulated. Walpole, the British minister at Lisbon, seems to have seen through the Abbé's duplicity, and advised Cumberland to conform implicitly to his instructions, and either return home, or at least not leave Lisbon without fresh orders from England. Unluckily, Mr Cumberland had adopted the idea that delay would be fatal to the success of the treaty, and, sanguine respecting the peaceful dispositions of the Spanish ministry, and confident in the integrity of Hussey, he resolved to proceed to Madrid upon his own responsibility—a temerity against which the event ought to warn all political agents.

The following paragraph of a letter to Lord Hillsborough, shows Mr Cumberland's sense of the risk which he thought it his duty to incur:—

"I am sensible I have taken a step which exposes me to censure upon failure of success, unless the reasons on which I have acted be weighed with candour, and even with indulgence. In the decision I have taken for entering Spain, I have had no other object but to keep alive a treaty to which any backwardness or evasion on my part would, I am persuaded, be immediate extinction. I know where my danger lies; but as my endeavours for the public service, and the honour of your administration, are sincere, I have no doubt that I shall obtain your protection."

From this quotation, to which others might be added, it is evident that, even in Cumberland's own eyes, nothing but his success could entirely vindi-

negotiation, there can be no doubt that he was suffered to remain at Madrid, in the character of a British agent, recognised as such by the ministry, in constant correspondence with the Secretary of State, and receiving from him directions respecting his residence at, or departure from Madrid. There seems, therefore, to have been neither humanity nor justice in refusing the payment of his drafts, and subjecting him to such wants and difficulties, that, after having declined the liberal offer of the Spanish monarch to defray his expenses, the British agent was only extricated from the situation of a penniless bankrupt, by the compassion of a private friend, who advanced him a seasonable loan of five hundred pounds. The state of the balance due to him was indeed considerable, being no less than four thousand five hundred pounds; and it may be thought, that, as Mr Cumberland's situation was ostensibly that of a private gentleman, travelling for health, much expense could not—at least ought not—to have attended his establishment. But his wife and daughters were in family with him; and we must allow for domestic comfort, and even some sort of splendour, in an individual, who was to hold communication with the principal servants of the Spanish crown. Besides, he had been promised an ample allowance for secret-service money, out of a sum placed at his own discretion. The truth seems to be, that Lord North's administration thought a thousand pounds was enough to have lost on an unsuccessful negotiation; and as Cumberland had certainly made himself in some degree responsible for the event,

strength of her kingdom for the recovery of this fortress, with which she naturally esteemed her national honour peculiarly connected. She was bribed by the promise of the most active and powerful assistance from France; and it is very improbable that her ministry would have sacrificed the high hopes which they entertained of carrying this important place by force of arms, in exchange for any thing short of its specific surrender.

Still, however, as Mr Cumberland acted with the most perfect good faith, and with a zeal, the fault of which was only its excess, the reader can scarce be prepared, by our account of his errors, for the unworthy treatment to which he was subjected. Our author affirms, and we must presume with perfect accuracy, that when he set out upon this mission, besides receiving a thousand pounds in hand, he had assurance from the Secretary of the Treasury, that all bills drawn by Mr Cumberland on his own bank, should be instantly replaced from the treasury; and he states, that, notwithstanding this positive pledge, accompanied by the naming a very large sum as placed at his discretion, no one penny was ever so replaced by government; and that he was obliged to repay from his private fortune, to a ruinous extent, the bankers who had advanced money on his private credit; for which, by no species of appeal or application, was he ever able to obtain reimbursement.

Whatever may be thought of Mr Cumberland's political prudence in venturing beyond his commission, or of his sanguine disposition, which too long continued to hope a favourable issue to a desperate

negotiation, there can be no doubt that he was suffered to remain at Madrid, in the character of a British agent, recognised as such by the ministry, in constant correspondence with the Secretary of State, and receiving from him directions respecting his residence at, or departure from Madrid. There seems, therefore, to have been neither humanity nor justice in refusing the payment of his drafts, and subjecting him to such wants and difficulties, that, after having declined the liberal offer of the Spanish monarch to defray his expenses, the British agent was only extricated from the situation of a penniless bankrupt, by the compassion of a private friend, who advanced him a seasonable loan of five hundred pounds. The state of the balance due to him was indeed considerable, being no less than four thousand five hundred pounds; and it may be thought, that, as Mr Cumberland's situation was ostensibly that of a private gentleman, travelling for health, much expense could not—at least ought not—to have attended his establishment. But his wife and daughters were in family with him; and we must allow for domestic comfort, and even some sort of splendour, in an individual, who was to hold communication with the principal servants of the Spanish crown. Besides, he had been promised an ample allowance for secret-service money, out of a sum placed at his own discretion. The truth seems to be, that Lord North's administration thought a thousand pounds was enough to have lost on an unsuccessful negotiation; and as Cumberland had certainly made himself in some degree responsible for the event,

the same ministers, who, doubtless, would have had no objection to avow the issue of his intrigues had they been successful, chose, in the contrary event, to disown them.

To encounter the unexpected losses to which he was thus subjected, Mr Cumberland was under the necessity of parting with his paternal property at an unfavourable season, and when its value could not be obtained. Shortly after followed the dissolution of the Board of Trade; and the situation of Secretary fell under Burke's economical pruning-knife—a compensation amounting only to one-half the value being appointed to the holder. Thus unpleasingly relieved from official and political duties, Mr Cumberland adopted the prudent resolution of relinquishing his town residence, and settling himself and his family at Tunbridge, where he continued to live in retirement, yet not without the exercise of an elegant hospitality, till the final close of his long life.

The *Anecdotes of Eminent Painters in Spain*, in two volumes, together with a Catalogue of the Pictures which adorn the Escurial, suffered to be made by the King of Spain's express permission, were the principal fruits of our author's visit to the continent. Yet we ought to except the very pretty story of Nicolas Pedrosa, an excellent imitation of Le Sage, which appeared in the *Observer*, a periodical paper, which Cumberland edited with considerable success. This was one of the literary enterprises in which the author, from his acquaintance with men and manners, as well as his taste and learning, was well qualified to excel, and the work continues to afford amusement both to the

general reader and the scholar. The latter is deeply interested in the curious and classical account which the *Observer* contains of the early Greek drama. In this department, Cumberland has acknowledged his debts to the celebrated Bentley, his grandfather, and to his less known, but scarce less ingenious relation, Richard Bentley, son of the celebrated scholar, and author of the comedy or farce termed *The Wishes*. The aid of the former was derived from the notes which Cumberland possessed, but that of Richard Bentley was more direct.

This learned and ingenious, but rather eccentric person, was the friend of Horace Walpole, who, as his nephew Cumberland complains with some justice, exercised the rights of patronage rather unmercifully. He had been unsuccessful as a dramatic author. His comic piece entitled *The Wishes*, was written with a view of ridiculing the ancient drama of Greece, particularly in their pedantic adherence to the unities. This was a purpose which could scarcely be understood by a vulgar audience, for much of it turned on the absurd structure of the stage of Athens, and the peculiar stoicism with which the Chorus, supposed to be spectators of the scene, deduce moral lessons of the justice of the gods from the atrocities which the action exhibits, but without stirring a finger to interfere or to prevent them. In ridicule of this absurdity, the Chorus in *The Wishes* are informed that a madman has just broken his way into the cellars, with a torch in his hand, to set fire to a magazine of gunpowder; on which, instead ot

using any means of prevention or escape, they began, in strophe and antistrophe, to lament their own condition, and exclaim against the thrice-unhappy madman — or rather the thrice-unhappy friends of the madman, who had not taken measures of securing him—or rather upon the six-times unhappy fate of themselves, thus exposed to the madman's fury. All this is a good jest to those who remember the stoicism with which the Choruses of Æschylus and Euripides view and comment upon the horrors which they witness on the stage, but it might have been esteemed caviare to the British audience in general; yet the entertainment was well received until the extravagant incident of hanging Harlequin on the stage. The author was so sensible of the absurdity of this exhibition, that he whispered to his nephew, Cumberland, during the representation,—"If they do not damn this, they deserve to be d—d themselves;" and, as he spoke, the condemnation of the piece was complete. It is much to be wished that this singular performance were given to the public in print.—The notice of Richard Bentley has led us something from our purpose, which only called on us to remark, that he furnished Cumberland with those splendid translations from the Greek dramatists which adorn *The Observer*. The author, however, claims for himself the praise due to a version of the Clouds of Aristophanes, afterwards incorporated with this periodical work.

The modern characters introduced by Cumberland in his *Observer*, were his own; and that of the benevolent Israelite, Abraham Abrahams, was,

he informs us, written upon principle, in behalf of a persecuted race. He followed up this generous intention in a popular comedy, entitled "*The Jew.*" The dramatic character of Sheva, combining the extremes of habitual parsimony and native philanthropy, was written in the same spirit of benevolence as that of Abrahams, and was excellently performed by Jack Bannister. The public prints gave the Jews credit for acknowledging their gratitude in a very substantial form. The author, in his Memoirs, does not disguise his wish, that they had flattered him with some token of the debt which he conceives them to have owed. We think, however, that a prior token of regard should have been bestowed on the author of *Joshua*, in the tale of *Count Fathom;* and, moreover, we cannot be surprised that the people in question felt a portrait in which they were rendered ludicrous as well as interesting, to be something between an affront and a compliment. Few of the better class of the Jewish persuasion would, we believe, be disposed to admit either Abrahams or Sheva as fitting representatives of their tribe.

In his retreat at Tunbridge, labouring in the bosom of his family, and making their common sitting-room his place of study, Cumberland continued to compose a number of dramatic pieces, of which he himself seems almost to have forgotten the names, and of which a modern reader can trace very few. We have subjoined, however, a list of them, with his other works, taken from the Index of his Memoirs. Several were successful; several unfortunate; many never performed at all; but

the spirit of the author continued unwearied and undismayed. *The Arab*, *The Walloons*, and many other plays, are forgotten; but the character of Penruddock, in the *Wheel of Fortune*, well conceived in itself, and admirably supported by Kemble,[1] and since by Charles Young, continues to command attention and applause. *The Carmelite*, a tragedy, on the regular tragic plan, attracted much attention, as the inimitable Siddons played the part of the Lady of St Valois, and Kemble that of Montgomeri. The plot, however, had that fault which, after all, clings to many of Cumberland's pieces—there was a want of originality. The spectator, or reader, was by the story irresistibly reminded of *Douglas*, and there was more taste than genius in the dialogue. The language was better than the sentiments; but the grace of the one could not al-

[1] ["Mr Kemble took great pains," says Mr Boaden, "with the character of Penruddock in the *Wheel of Fortune*. It came at length upon the stage, on the 28th of February, (1795,) one of the most perfect impersonations that had ever excited human sympathy. He had fashioned every sentence of the part to his own organs, so that it seemed a decided reality; and his personal manner was so little disturbed, that the spectator, by an easy delusion, almost fancied that Mr Kemble was relating some striking misfortunes that had happened, in early life, to himself. I most seriously affirm, that, for *identity*, Penruddock would hardly admit of competition. Here, from the great intimacy between us, he advised with me as to the plain and almost quaker attire he wore; and I saw in his walk, and occasionally in his countenance, the image of that noble wreck of *treachery* and *love*, which was shortly to command the tears of a whole people. He had a habit, by intense meditation, of working himself into a character which he considered important, and calculated to diversify the usual range of his performances. Penruddock merited his pains."—*Memoirs of Kemble*, vol ii. p. 140.]

ways disguise that the other wanted novelty. *The Brothers*, *The West Indian*, and *The Wheel of Fortune*, stand high in the list of acting plays, and we are assured, by a very competent judge, that *First Love*, which we have not ourselves lately seen, is an excellent comedy, and maintains possession of the stage. The drama must have been Cumberland's favourite style of composition, for he went on, shooting shaft after shaft at the mark which he did not always hit, and often effacing by failures the memory of triumphant successes. His plays at last amounted to upwards of fifty, and intercession and flattery were sometimes necessary to force their way to the stage. On these occasions the Greenroom traditions avow that the veteran bard did not hesitate to bestow the most copious praises on the company who were to bring forward a new piece, at the expense of their rivals of the other house, who had his tribute of commendation in their turn, when their acceptance of a play put them in his good graces. It was also said, that when many of the dramatic authors united in a complaint to the Lord Chancellor against the late Mr Sheridan, then manager of Drury-Lane, he prevented Cumberland from joining the confederacy, by offering to bring out any manuscript play which he should select for performance. But selection was not an easy task to an author, to whom all the offspring of his genius were equally dear. After much nervous hesitation, he trusted the chance to fortune; and out of a dozen of manuscript plays which lay by him, is said to have reached the manager the first which came to hand, without reading the title.

Yet if Cumberland had the fondness of an author for his own productions, it must be owned he had also the fortitude to submit, without murmuring, to the decision of the public. "I have had my full share of success, and I trust I have paid my tax for it," he says, good-humouredly, "always without mutiny, and very generally without murmuring. I have never irritated the town by making a sturdy stand against their opposition, when they have been pleased to point it against any one of my productions. I never failed to withdraw myself on the very first intimation that I was unwelcome; and the only offence that I have been guilty of, is, that I have not always thought the worse of a composition only because the public did not think well of it."[1]

[1] Memoirs, vol. i., p. 269. [We presume this play was *The Jew of Mogadore*, acted in 1808. It was set to music by Michael Kelly, who, in his *Reminiscences*, gives the following account of the reception of the piece by the management of Drury Lane. We quote the passage as highly to Mr Sheridan's honour:—"It was with great reluctance that the Board of Management at Drury Lane accepted it; therefore, when I had finished the music of the first act, I rested upon my oars, until I knew their final determination. I met Mr Sheridan one day in Essex Street in the Strand, and told him of it. He desired me to go on with it by all means, 'For,' said he, 'if the opera should fail, you will fall with a fine classical scholar, and elegant writer, as well as a sound dramatist,' (such was his expression of opinion of Cumberland's abilities). 'Go instantly,' continued he, 'to those discerning critics, who call themselves the "Board of Management," and tell them from me, if you please, that they are all asses, to presume to sit in judgment on the writings of such a man as Cumberland; and say, further, that *I order* the opera to be accepted, and put into rehearsal.'—'And pray, sir,' said I, 'in what light am I to view this Board of Management? — What are they?'—'Pegs to hang hats upon,' said Sheridan."]

The Sacred Muse shared with her dramatic sisters in Cumberland's worship. In his poem of *Calvary*, he treated of a subject which, notwithstanding Klopstock's success, may be termed too lofty and too awful to be the subject of verse. He also wrote, in a literary partnership with Sir James Bland Burgess, (well known as the author of *Richard Cœur de Lion*, and other compositions,) *The Exodiad*, an epic poem, founded on sacred history. By *Calvary* the author sustained the inconvenient loss of a hundred pounds, and *The Exodiad* did not prove generally successful.

The author also undertook the task of compiling his own Memoirs; and the well-known Mr Richard Sharp,[1] equally beloved for his virtues, and admired for the extent of his information, and the grace with which he communicates it, by encouraging Mr Cumberland to become his own biographer, has performed a most acceptable service to the public. It is indeed one of the author's most pleasing works, and conveys a very accurate idea of his talents, feelings, and character, with many powerful sketches of the age which has passed away. It is impossible to read, without deep interest, Cumberland's account of the theatre in Goodman's Fields, where Garrick, in the flower of his youth, and all the energy of genius, bounded on the stage as Lothario, and pointed out to ridicule the wittol husband and the heavy-paced Horatio; while in the last character, Mr Quin, contrasting the old with the modern dramatic manner, surly

[1] [Author of Letters and Essays in prose and verse. London: 12mo, 1834.]

and solemn, in a dark-green coat, profusely embroidered, an enormous periwig, rolled stockings, and high-heeled, square-toed shoes, mouthed out his heroics in a deep, full, unvaried tone of declamation, accompanied by a kind of sawing action, which had more of the senate than the stage. Several characters of distinguished individuals are also drawn in the Memoirs with much force; particularly those of Doddington, Lord Halifax, Lord Sackville, George Selwyn, and others of the past age. There are some traits of satire and ridicule which are perhaps a little overcharged. This work was to have remained in manuscript until the author's death, when certainly such a publication appears with a better grace than while the autobiographer still treads the stage. But Mr Cumberland, notwithstanding his indefatigable labours, had never been in easy circumstances since his unlucky negotiation in Spain; and in the work itself, he makes the affecting confession, that circumstances, paramount to prudence and propriety, urged him to anticipate the date of publication. The Memoirs were bought by Lackington's house for L.500, and passed speedily from a quarto to an octavo shape.

We have yet to mention another undertaking of this unwearied author, at a period of life advanced beyond the ordinary date of humanity. The *Edinburgh Review* was now in possession of a full tide of popularity, and the *Quarterly Review* was just commenced, or about to commence, under powerful auspices, when Mr Cumberland undertook the conduct of a critical work, which he entitled *The*

London Review, on an entirely new plan, inasmuch as each article was to be published with the author's name annexed. He was supported by assistants of very considerable talents; but, after two or three numbers, the scheme became abortive. In fact, though the plan contained an appearance of more boldness and fairness than the ordinary scheme of anonymous criticism, yet it involved certain inconveniences, which its author did not foresee.[1] It is true, no one seriously believes that, because the imposing personal plural *We* is adopted in a critical article, the reader is from that circumstance to infer that the various pieces in a periodical review, are subjected to the revisal of a board of literary judges, and that each criticism is sanctioned by their general suffrage, and bears the stamp of their joint wisdom. Still, however, the use of the first person plural is so far legitimate, that in every well-governed publication of the kind, the articles, by whomsoever written, are at least revised by the competent person selected as editor, which affords a better warrant to the public for candour and caution, than if each were to rest on the separate responsibility of the individual writer. It is even

1 ["The *London Review*, set up in 1809, under Mr Cumberland's editorial care, did not outlive many numbers. He spoke great things in the prospectus about the distinguishing feature of the journal, viz. its having the writer's name affixed to the articles. This plan has succeeded pretty well both in France and Germany, but has failed utterly, as often as it has been tried, in this country. It is needless, however, to go into any speculation on the principle *here;* for the *London Review*, whether sent into the world with or without names, must soon have died of the original disease of dulness."—BYRON's *Works*, vol. ix., p. 62, *note.*]

more important to remark, that the anonymous character of periodical criticism has a tendency to give freedom to literary discussion, and at the same time, to soften the animosities to which it might otherwise give rise; and, in that respect, the peculiar language which members of the senate hold towards each other, and which is for that reason called parliamentary, resembles the ordinary style of critical discussion. An author, who is severely criticized in a review, can hardly be entitled, in the ordinary case, to take notice of it otherwise than as a literary question; whereas a direct and immediate collision, with a particular individual, seems to tend either, on the one hand, to limit the freedom of criticism, by placing it under the regulation of a timid complaisance, or, on the other, to render it (which is, to say the least, needless) of a fiercer and more personal cast, and thereby endanger the decorum, and perhaps the peace of society. Besides this, there will always be a greater authority ascribed by the generality of readers to the oracular opinion issued from the cloudy sanctuary of an invisible body, than to the mere *dictum* of a man with a Christian name and sirname, which may not sound much better than those of the author over whom he predominates. In the far-famed Secret Tribunal of Germany, it was the invisibility of the judges which gave them all their awful jurisdiction.

So numerous were Cumberland's publications, that, having hurried through the greater part of them, we have yet to mention his novels, though it is as a writer of fictitious history he is here intro-

duced. They were three in number, *Arundel*, *Henry*, and *John de Lancaster*. The two first were deservedly well received by the public; the last was a labour of old age, and was less fortunate. It would be altogether unfair to dwell upon it, as forming a part of those productions on which the author's literary reputation must permanently rest.

Arundel, the first of these novels, was hastily written during the residence of a few weeks at Brighthelmstone, and sent to the press by detached parcels. It showed at the first glance what is seldom to be found in novels, the certainty that the author had been well acquainted with schools, with courts, and with fashionable life, and knew the topics on which he was employing his pen. The style, also, was easy and clear, and the characters boldly and firmly sketched. Cumberland, in describing Arundel's feelings at exchanging his college society, and the pursuits of learning, to become secretary to the Earl of G., unquestionably remembered the alteration of his own destination in early life. But there is no reason to think that in the darker shades of the Earl of G. he had any intention to satirize his patron, the Earl of Halifax, whom he paints in his Memoirs in much more agreeable colours.

The success which this work obtained, without labour, induced the author to write *Henry*, on which he bestowed his utmost attention. He formed it upon Fielding's model, and employed two years in polishing and correcting the style. Perhaps it does not, after all, claim such great precedence over *Arundel* as the labour of the author induced

him to expect. Yet it would be unjust to deny to *Henry* the praise of an excellent novel. There is much beauty of description, and considerable display of acquaintance with English life in the lower ranks; indeed, Cumberland's clowns, sketched from his favourite men of Kent, amongst whom he spent his life, may be placed by the side of similar portraits by the first masters.

Above all, the character of Ezekiel Daw, though the outline must have been suggested by that of Abraham Adams, is so well distinguished by original and spirited conception, that it may pass for an excellent original. The Methodists, as they abhor the lighter arts of literature, and perhaps contemn those which are more serious, have, as might have been expected, met much rough usage at the hands of novelists and dramatic authors, who generally represent them either as idiots or hypocrites. A very different feeling is due to many, perhaps to most, of this enthusiastic sect; nor is it rashly to be inferred, that he who makes religion the general object of his life, is for that sole reason to be held either a fool or an impostor. The professions of strict piety are inconsistent with open vice, and therefore must, in the general case, lead men to avoid the secret practice of what, openly known, must be attended with loss of character; and thus the Methodists, and other rigid sectaries, oppose to temptation the strong barriers of interest and habitual restraint, in addition to those restrictions which religion and morality impose on all men. The touch of enthusiasm connected with Methodism renders it a species of devotion, warmly

affecting the feelings, and therefore peculiarly calculated to operate upon the millions of ignorant poor, whose understandings the most learned divines would in vain address by mere force of argument; and, doubtless, many such simple enthusiasts as Ezekiel Daw, by their well-meant and indefatigable exertions amongst the stubborn and ignorant, have been the instruments of Providence to call such men from a state of degrading and brutal profligacy, to a life more worthy of rational beings, and of the name of Christians. Thus thinking, we are of opinion, that the character of Ezekiel Daw, which shows the Methodist preacher in his strength and in his weakness, bold and fervent when in discharge of his mission, simple, well-meaning, and even absurd, in the ordinary affairs of life, is not only an exquisite, but a just portrait.

Cumberland seems to have been less happy in some of the incidents of low life which he has introduced. He forced, as we have some reason to suspect, his own elegance of ideas, into an imitation of Fielding's scenes of this nature; and, as bashful men sometimes turn impudent in labouring to be easy, our ingenious author has occasionally, in his descriptions of Zachary Cawdle and his spouse, become disgusting, when he meant to be humorous.

The author of *Henry* piqued himself particularly on the conduct of the story, but we confess ourselves unable to discover much sufficient reason. His skein is neither more artfully perplexed, nor more happily disentangled, than in many tales of the same kind; there is the usual, perhaps we should

call it the necessary, degree of improbability, for which the reader must make the usual and necessary allowance, and little can be said in this respect, either to praise or censure the author. But there is one series of incidents, connected with a train of sentiment rather peculiar to Cumberland, which may be traced through several of his dramas, which appears in *Arundel*, and which makes a principal part of the interest in *Henry*. He had a peculiar taste in love affairs, which induced him to reverse the usual and natural practice of courtship, and to throw upon the softer sex the task of wooing, which is more gracefully, as well as naturally, the province of the man. In *Henry*, he has carried this farther, and endowed his hero with all the self-denial of the Hebrew patriarch when he has placed him within the influence of a seductive being, much more fascinating in her address, than the frail Egyptian matron. In this point, Cumberland either did not copy his master, Fielding, at all, or, what cannot be conceived of an author so acute, he mistook for serious that author's ironical account of the continence of Joseph Andrews. We do not desire to bestow many words on this topic; but we are afraid, such is the universal inaccuracy of moral feeling in this age, that a more judicious author would not have striven against the stream, by holding up his hero as an example of what is likely to create more ridicule than imitation.

It might be also justly urged against the author, that the situations in which Henry is placed with Susan May, exceed the decent license permitted to

modern writers; and certainly they do so. But Cumberland himself entertained a different opinion, and concludes with this apology:—"If, in my zeal to exhibit virtue triumphant over the most tempting allurements, I have painted those allurements in too vivid colours, I am sorry, and ask pardon of all those who think the moral did not heal the mischief."

Another peculiarity of our author's plots is, that an affair of honour, a duel either designed or actually fought, forms an ordinary part of them. This may be expected in fictitious history, as a frequent incident, since the remains of the Gothic customs survive in that particular only, and since the indulgence which it yields to the angry passions gives an opportunity, valuable to the novelist, of stepping beyond the limits prescribed by the ordinary rules of society, and introducing scenes of violence, without incurring the charge of improbability. But Cumberland himself had something of a chivalrous disposition. His mind was nurtured in sentiments of honour, and in the necessity of maintaining reputation with the hazard of life; in which he resembled another dramatic poet, the celebrated author of *Douglas*, who was also an enthusiast on the point of honour. In private life, Cumberland has proved his courage; and in his Memoirs he mentions, with some complacency, his having extorted from a "rough and boisterous captain of the sea" an apology for some expressions reflecting on his friend and patron, Lord Sackville. In his Memoirs, he dwells with pleasure on the attach-

ment shown to him by two companies of Volunteers, raised in the town of Tunbridge, and attaches considerable importance to the commission of Commandant, with which their choice had invested him. They presented their commander with a sword, and, when their pay was withdrawn, offered to continue their service, gratuitously, under him.

The long and active literary life of this amiable man and ingenious author, was concluded on the 7th May, 1811, in his eightieth year, at the house of Mr Henry Fry, in Bedford Place, Russel Square, and he was interred in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey.

His literary executors were Mr Richard Sharp, already mentioned, Mr Rogers, the distinguished author of *The Pleasures of Memory*, and Sir James Bland Burgess; but we have seen none of his posthumous works, except *Retrospection*, a poem in blank verse, which appeared in 1812, and which seems to have been wrought up out of the ideas which had suggested themselves, while he was engaged in writing his Memoirs.

Mr Cumberland had the misfortune to outlive his lady and several of his family. His surviving offspring were Charles, who, we believe, held high rank in the army, and William, a post-captain in the navy. His eldest daughter, Elizabeth, married Lord Edward Bentinck, son of the Duke of Portland; his second, Sophia, was less happily wedded to William Badcock, Esq., who died in the prime of life, and left a family of four grandchildren, whom Chancery awarded to the care of Mr Cumberland. His third surviving daughter

was Frances Marianne, born during his unlucky embassy to Spain. To her the author affectionately inscribed his Memoirs, " as having found, in her filial affection, all the comforts that the best of friends could give, and derived, from her talents and understanding, all the enjoyments that the most pleasing of companions could communicate."

In youth, Mr Cumberland must have been handsome; in age, he possessed a pleasing external appearance, and the polite ease of a gentleman accustomed to the best company. In society, he was eloquent, well-informed and full of anecdote; a willing dealer in the commerce of praise, or—for he took no great pains to ascertain its sincerity —we should rather say, of flattery. His conversation often showed the author in his strong and in his weak points. The foibles are well known which Sheridan embodied on the stage, in the character of Sir Fretful Plagiary. But it is not from a caricature that a just picture can be drawn, and in the little pettish sub-acidity of temper which Cumberland sometimes exhibited, there was more of humorous sadness, than of ill-will, either to his critics or his contemporaries. He certainly, like most poets, was little disposed to yield to the assaults of the former, and often, like a gallant commander, drew all his forces together, to defend the point which was least tenable. He was a veteran also, the last living representative of the literature of his own age, and conceived himself the surviving depositary of their fame, obliged to lay lance in rest against all which was inconsistent with the rules which they had laid down or observed. In these

characters it cannot be denied, that while he was stoutly combating for the cause of legitimate comedy and the regular novel, Cumberland manifested something of personal feeling in his zeal against those contemporaries who had found new roads, or by-paths, as he thought them, to fame and popularity, and forestalled such as were scrupulously treading the beaten highway, without turning to the right or to the left. These imperfections, arising, perhaps, from natural temper, from a sense of unmerited neglect, and the pressure of disadvantageous circumstances of fortune, or from the keen spirit of rivalry proper to men of an ardent disposition, rendered irritable by the eagerness of a contest for public applause, are the foibles rather of the profession than the individual; and though the man of letters might have been more happy had he been able entirely to subdue them, they detract nothing from the character of the man of worth, the scholar, and the gentleman.[1]

[1] ["Here Cumberland lies, having acted his parts,
The Terence of England, the mender of hearts;
A flattering painter, who made it his care
To draw men as they ought to be, not as they are.
His gallants are all faultless, his women divine,
And Comedy wonders at being so fine;
Like a tragedy queen he has dizen'd her out,
Or rather, like tragedy giving a rout.
His fools have their follies, so lost in a crowd
Of virtues and feelings, that Folly grows proud,
And coxcombs, alike in their failings alone,
Adopting his portraits are pleased with their own:
Say, where has our poet this malady caught,
Or, wherefore his characters thus without fault?
Say, was it that mainly directing his view
To find out men's virtues, and finding them few,
Quite sick of pursuing each troublesome elf,
He grew lazy at last, and drew from himself?"—GOLDSMITH.]

We believe Cumberland's character to have been justly, as well as affectionately, summed up in the sermon preached on occasion of his funeral, by his venerable friend, Dr Vincent, then Dean of Westminster. "The person you now see deposited, is Richard Cumberland, an author of no small merit; his writings were chiefly for the stage, but of strict moral tendency—they were not without their faults, but these were not of a gross description. He wrote as much as any, and few wrote better; and his works will be held in the highest estimation, so long as the English language is understood. He considered the theatre as a school for moral improvement, and his remains are truly worthy or mingling with the illustrious dead which surround us. In his subjects on Divinity, you find the true Christian spirit; and may God, in his mercy, assign him the true Christian reward!"

CATALOGUE OF CUMBERLAND'S WORKS,

FROM THE

INDEX TO HIS MEMOIRS.

Epic.

Calvary.
Exodiad.

Dramatic.

Arab.
Banishment of Cicero.
Battle of Hastings.
Brutus the Elder.
Box-Lobby Challenge.
Brothers.
Choleric Man.
Country Attorney.
Calypso.
Caractacus.
Carmelite.
Clouds, from the Greek of Aristophanes.
Dependant.
Days of Geri.
Don Pedro.
Eccentric Lover.
Fashionable Lover.

False Demetrius.
False Impressions.
First Love.
Hint to Husbands.
Impostor.
Jew.
Joanna of Montfaucon; a Dramatic Romance.
Last of the Family.
Mysterious Husband.
Natural Son.
Note of Hand.
Sailor's Daughter.
Shakspeare in the Shades.
Timon of Athens.
Torrendal.
Walloons.
Wat Tyler.
West Indian.
Wheel of Fortune.
Widow of Delphi.
Word for Nature.

Fugitive Pieces.

Affectation.
Lines to Princess Amelia.
Avarice.
Dreams.
Envy.
Epilogue to the Arab.
Fragment.
Hamlet.
Hammond.
Humility.
Judges.
Verses to Dr James.
——— Lord Mansfield.
——— on Nelson's Death.
Ode to the Sun.
Lines addressed to Pitt.
——— on Pride.
——— on Prudery.
——— to the Prince of Wales.
——— to Romney the Painter
Elegy on St Mark's Eve.
Translations from the Troades.
——— from Virgil.

Prose Publications.

Curtius Redeemed from the Gulf.
Evidences of the Christian Revelation.
Controversy with Lowth on the Subject of Dr Bentley.

Miscellaneous.

Anecdotes of Eminent Painters in Spain.
Catalogue of Paintings in the King of Spain's Palace.
Sermons.
Periodical Papers in the Observer.
Translation of the Psalms.
Memoirs.

Novels.

Arundel.
Henry.
John de Lancaster.

To this formidable list there remain yet to be added the critical papers written by the author for the *London Review; Retrospection*, a poem, in blank verse, on the author's own past life; and perhaps other publications, unknown to the Editor.

Abbotsford, December, 1824.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

Our biographical notices of distinguished Novelists were in some degree proportioned to the space which their labours occupy in the Collection for which these sketches were originally written. On that principle, the present subject, so interesting in every other point of view, could not be permitted long to detain us. The circumstances also of Dr Goldsmith's life, his early struggles with poverty and distress, the success of his brief and brilliant career after he had become distinguished as an author, are so well known, and have been so well and so often told, that a short outline is all that ought here to be attempted.[1]

Oliver Goldsmith was born on the 29th November, 1728, at Pallas, (or rather Palice,) in the parish of Farney, and county of Longford, in Ireland, where his father, the Rev. Charles Goldsmith, a minister of the Church of England, at that time resided. This worthy clergyman, whose virtues his celebrated son afterwards rendered immortal, in the character of the Village Preacher,[2] had a

[1] [It is understood that Mr Prior, the author of the Life of Burke, has prepared for the press Memoirs of Goldsmith, on a very extensive scale, and enriched with many new and important details, and original documents. 1834.]

[2] [See the Deserted Village.]

family of seven children, for whom he was enabled to provide but very indifferently. He obtained ultimately a benefice in the county of Roscommon, but died early; for the careful researches of the Rev. John Graham of Lifford have found his widow *nigra veste senescens*, residing with her son Oliver in Ballymahon, so early as 1740. Among the shop accounts of a petty grocer of the place, Mrs Goldsmith's name occurs frequently as a customer for trifling articles; on which occasions Master Noll appears to have been his mother's usual emissary. He was recollected, however, in the neighbourhood, by more poetical employments, as that of playing on the flute, and wandering in solitude on the shores, or among the islands of the river Inny, which is remarkably beautiful at Ballymahon.

Oliver early distinguished himself by the display of lively talents, as well as by that uncertainty of humour which is so often attached to genius, as the slave in the chariot of the Roman triumph. An uncle by affinity, the Rev. Thomas Contarine, undertook the expense of affording to so promising a youth the advantages of a scholastic education.[1] He

[1] [" This benevolent man," says Mr Campbell, " was descended from the noble family of the Contarini of Venice. His ancestor having married a nun in his native country, was obliged to fly with her into France, where she died of the small-pox. Being pursued by ecclesiastical censures, Contarini came to England; but the puritanical manners, which then prevailed, having afforded him but a cold reception, he was on his way to Ireland, when, at Chester, he met with a young lady, of the name of Chaloner, whom he married. Having afterwards conformed to the Established Church, he,

was put to school at Edgeworths-town, and, in June 1744, was sent to Dublin College as a sizer; a situation which subjected him to much discouragement and ill usage, especially as he had the misfortune to fall under the charge of a brutal tutor.[1]

On 15th June, 1747, Goldsmith obtained his only academical laurel, being an Exhibition on the foundation of Erasmus Smythe, Esq. Some indiscreet frolic induced him soon afterwards to quit the

through the interest of his wife's family, obtained ecclesiastical preferment in the diocese of Elphin. Their lineal descendant was the benefactor of Goldsmith."—*Specimens*, vol. vi., p. 252.]

[1] [" Though he occasionally distinguished himself by his translations from the classics, his general appearance at the University corresponded neither with the former promises, nor future developement of his talents. He was, like Johnson, a lounger at the college-gate. He gained neither premiums nor a scholarship, and was not admitted to the degree of bachelor of arts, till two years after the regular time. His backwardness, it would appear, was the effect of despair rather than of wilful negligence. He had been placed under a savage tutor, named Theaker Wilder, who used to insult him at public examinations, and to treat his delinquencies with a ferocity that broke his spirit. On one occasion, poor Oliver was so imprudent as to invite a company of young people, of both sexes, to a dance and supper in his rooms. On receiving intelligence of which, Theaker grimly repaired to the place of revelry, belaboured him before his guests, and rudely broke up the assembly. The disgrace of this inhuman treatment drove him for a time from the University. He set out from Dublin, intending to sail from Cork for some other country, he knew not whither; but after wandering about till he was reduced to such famine, that he thought a handful of grey peas, which a girl gave him at a wake, the sweetest repast he had ever tasted, he returned home, like the prodigal son, and matters were adjusted for his being received again at college." —CAMPBELL.]

University for a period; and he appears thus early to have commenced that sort of idle strolling life, which has often great charms for youths of genius, because it frees them from every species of subjection, and leaves them full masters of their own time, and their own thoughts; a liberty which they do not feel too dearly bought, at the expense of fatigue, of hunger, and of all the other inconveniences incidental to those who travel without money. Those who can recollect journeys of this kind, with all the shifts, necessities, and petty adventures, which attend them, will not wonder at the attractions which they had for such a youth as Goldsmith.[1] Notwithstanding these erratic expe-

[1] [" About the time of his finally leaving the university, his father died. His uncle Contarine, from whom he experienced the kindness of a father, wished him to have taken orders, and Oliver is said to have applied for them, but to have been rejected; though for what reason is not sufficiently known. He then accepted the situation of private tutor in a gentleman's family, and retained it long enough to save about L.30, with which he bought a tolerable horse, and went forth upon his adventures. At the end of six weeks, his friends having heard nothing of him, concluded that he had left the kingdom, when he returned to his mother's house without a penny, upon a little horse, which he called Fiddleback, and which was not worth more than twenty shillings. The account which he gave of himself was, that he had been at Cork, where he had sold his former horse, and paid his passage to America; but the ship happening to sail whilst he was viewing the curiosities of the city, he had just money enough left to purchase Fiddleback, and to reach the house of an old acquaintance on the road. This nominal friend, however, had received him very coldly, and in order to evade his application for pecuniary relief, had advised him to sell his diminutive steed, and promised him another in its place, which would cost him nothing either for price or provender. To confirm this promise, he pulled out an oaken staff from beneath

ditions, he was admitted Bachelor of Arts in 1749.

Goldsmith's persevering friend, Mr Contarine, seems to have recommended the direction of his nephew's studies to medicine, and in the year 1752 he was settled at Edinburgh to pursue that science. Of his residence in Scotland, Goldsmith retained no favourable recollections. He was thoughtless, and he was cheated; he was poor, and he was nearly starved. Yet, in a very lively letter from Edinburgh, addressed to Robert Brianton of Ballymahon, he closes a sarcastic description of the country and its inhabitants, with the good-humoured candour which made so distinguished a part of his character. " An ugly and a poor man is society only for himself, and such society the world lets me enjoy in great abundance. Fortune has given you circumstances, and Nature a power to look charming in the eyes of the fair. Nor do I envy my dear Bob such blessings, while I may sit down and

a bed. Just as this generous offer had been made, a neighbouring gentleman came in, and invited both the miser and Goldsmith to dine with him. Upon a short acquaintance, Oliver communicated his situation to the stranger, and was enabled by his liberality, to proceed on his journey. This was his story. His mother, it may be supposed, was looking rather gravely upon her prudent child, who had such adventures to relate, when he concluded them by saying, ' And now, my dear mother, having struggled so hard to come home to you, I wonder that you are not more rejoiced to see me.'—Mr Contarine next resolved to send him to the Temple; but, on his way to London he was fleeced of all his money in gaming, and returned once more to his mother's house in disgrace and affliction. Again was his good uncle reconciled to him, and equipped him for Edinburgh, that he might pursue the study of medicine."—CAMPBELL.]

laugh at the world and at myself, the most ridiculous object in it."[1]

From Edinburgh our student passed to Leyden, but not without the diversities of an arrest for debt, a captivity of seven days at Newcastle, from having been found in company with some Scotchmen in the French service, and the no less unpleasing variety of a storm.[2] At Leyden, Goldsmith was peculiarly exposed to a temptation which he never at any period of his life could easily resist. The opportunities of gambling were frequent,—he seldom declined them, and was at length stripped of every shilling.

In this hopeless condition Goldsmith commenced his travels, with one shirt in his pocket, and a devout reliance on Providence. It is understood, that in the

[1] [" On his arrival at Edinburgh," says Mr Campbell, " he took lodgings, and sallied forth to take a view of the city; but, at a late hour, he recollected that he had omitted to inform himself of the name and address of his landlady; and would not have found his way back, if he had not fortunately met the porter who had carried his luggage."]

[2] [Mr Campbell continues, " If Leyden, however, was his object, he, with the usual eccentricity of his motions, set out to reach it, by way of Bourdeaux, and embarked in a ship which was bound thither from Leith; but was driven, by stress of weather, into Newcastle-upon-Tyne. His fellow passengers were some Scotchmen, who had been employed in raising men in their own country for the service of the King of France. They were arrested, by orders from government, at Newcastle; and Goldsmith, who had been committed to prison with them, was not liberated till after a fortnight's confinement. By this accident, however, he was eventually saved from an early death. The vessel sailed during his imprisonment, and was wrecked at the mouth of the Garonne, where every soul on board perished."—*Specimens, &c.* vol. vi. p. 255.]

narrative of George, eldest son of the Vicar of Wakefield, the author has given a sketch of the resources which enabled him, on foot and without money, to make the tour of Europe. Through Germany and Flanders he had recourse to his vio lin, in which he was tolerably skilled; and a lively tune usually procured him a lodging in some peasant's cottage for the evening. In Italy, where his musical skill was held in less esteem, he found hospitality by disputing at the monasteries, in the character of a travelling scholar, upon certain philosophical theses, which the learned inhabitants were obliged, by their foundation, to uphold against all impugners. Thus, he obtained, sometimes money, sometimes lodgings. He must have had other resources to procure both, which he has not thought proper to intimate. The foreign Universities afford similar facilities to poor scholars, with those presented by the Monasteries. Goldsmith resided at Padua for several months, and is said to have taken a degree at Louvain. Thus far is certain, that an account of the tour made by so good a judge of human nature, in circumstances so singular, would have made one of the most entertaining books in the world; and it is both wonder and pity, that Goldsmith did not hit upon a publication of his travels, amongst the other literary resources in which his mind was fertile. He was not ignorant of the advantages which his mode of travelling had opened to him. " Countries," he says, in his *Essay on Polite Literature in Europe*, " wear very different appearances to travellers of different circumstanees. A man who is whirled through Europe in his post-

chaise, and the pilgrim who walks the great tour on foot, will form very different conclusions. *Haud inexpertus loquor.*" Perhaps he grew ashamed ot the last admission, which he afterwards omitted. Goldsmith spent about twelve months in these wanderings, and landed in England in the year 1746, after having perambulated France, Italy, and part of Germany.

Poverty was now before our author in all its bitterness. His Irish friends had long renounced or forgotten him; and the wretched post of usher to an academy, of which he has drawn so piteous a picture in George's account of himself, was his refuge from actual starving. Unquestionably, his description was founded on personal recollections, where he says, " I was up early and late; I was brow-beat by the master; hated for my ugly face by the mistress; worried by the boys within; and never permitted to stir out, to seek civility abroad." This state of slavery he underwent at Peckham Academy, and had such bitter recollection thereof, as to be offended at the slightest allusion to it. An acquaintance happening to use the proverbial phrase, "Oh, that is all a holiday at Peckham," Goldsmith reddened, and asked if he meant to affront him. From this miserable condition he escaped with difficulty, to that of journeyman, or rather shop-porter, to a chemist in Fish-street-hill, in whose service he was recognised by Dr Sleigh,[1] his countryman and fellow-student at Edinburgh,

[1] The Dr Sligo of Foote's farce, "The Devil upon two Sticks in London"

who, to his eternal honour, relieved Oliver Goldsmith from this state of slavish degradation.

Under the auspices of his friend and countryman, Goldsmith commenced practice as a physician about the Bankside, and afterwards near the Temple; and although unsuccessful in procuring fees, had soon plenty of patients. It was now that he first thought of having recourse to that pen, which afterwards afforded the public so much delight. He wrote, he laboured, he compiled; he is described by one contemporary as wearing a rusty full-trimmed black suit, the very livery of the muses, with his pockets stuffed with papers, and his head with projects; gradually he forced himself and his talents into notice, and was at last enabled to write, in one letter to a friend, that he was too poor to be gazed at, but too rich to need assistance;[1] and to boast in another, of the refined conversation which he was sometimes admitted to partake in.

He now circulated proposals for publishing, by subscription, his *Essay on Polite Literature in Europe*, the profits of which he destined to equipping himself for India, having obtained from the Company the appointment of physician to one of their factories on the coast of Coromandel. But to rise in literature was more his desire than to increase his fortune. "I eagerly long," he said, "to embrace every opportunity to separate myself from the vulgar, as much in my circumstances as I am already in my sentiments.——I find I want constitution and a strong steady disposition, which alone

[1] Letter to Daniel Hodson, Esq. See Life of Goldsmith, prefixed to his Works, in four volumes, 1801, vol. i., p. 42.

makes men great. I will, however, correct my faults, since I am conscious of them." [1]

Goldsmith's versatile talents and ready pen soon engaged him in the service of the booksellers; and doubtless the touches of his spirit and humour were used to enliven the dull pages of many a sorry miscellany and review; a mode of living which, joined to his own improvidence, rendered his in-

1 [" Whatever change of public estimation he experienced, the man was not to be altered, and he continued to exhibit a personal character which was neither much reformed by experience, nor dignified by reputation. It is but too well known, that with all his original and refined faculties, he was often the butt of witlings, and the dupe of impostors. He threw away his money at the gaming-table, and might also be said to be a losing gambler in conversation, for he aimed in all societies at being brilliant and argumentative; but generally chose to dispute on the subjects which he least understood, and contrived to forfeit as much credit for common sense as could be got rid of in colloquial intercourse. After losing his appointment to India, he applied to Lord Bute for a salary, to be enabled to travel into the interior of Asia. The petition was neglected because he was then unknown. The same boon, however, or some adequate provision, might have been obtained for him afterwards, when he was recommended to the Earl of Northumberland, at that time Lord-lieutenant of Ireland. But when he waited on the earl, he threw away his prepared compliments on his lordship's steward, and then retrieved the mistake by telling the nobleman, for whom he had meditated a courtly speech, that he had no confidence in the patronage of the great, but would rather rely upon the booksellers. There must have been something, however, with all his peculiarities, still endearing in his personal character. Burke was known to recall his memory with tears of affection in his eyes. It cannot be believed, that the better genius of his writings was always absent from his conversation. One may conceive graces of his spirit to have been drawn forth by Burke and Reynolds, which neither Johnson nor Garrick had the sensibility to appreciate."—CAMPBELL.]

come as fluctuating as his occupation. He wrote many Essays for various periodical publications, and afterwards collected them into one volume, finding that they were unceremoniously appropriated by his contemporaries. In the preface, he compares himself to the fat man in a famine, who, when his fellow-sufferers propose to feast on the superfluous part of his person, insisted with some justice on having the first slice himself. But his most elaborate effort in this style is the *Citizen of the World ;* letters supposed to be written by a Chinese philosopher, resident in England, an imitation of the *Lettres Persannes* of Montesquieu. Still, however, though subsisting thus precariously, he was getting forward in society; and had already, in the year 1761, made his way as far as Dr Johnson, who seems, from their first acquaintance, till death separated them, to have entertained for Goldsmith the most sincere friendship, regarding his genius with respect, his failings with indulgence, and his person with affection.

It was probably soon after this first acquaintance, that Necessity, the parent of so many works of genius, gave birth to the *Vicar of Wakefield.* The circumstances attending the sale of the work to the fortunate publisher, are too singular to be told in any other words than those of Johnson, as reported by his faithful chronicler, Boswell.

" I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith, that he was in great distress; and, as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and

found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return, and, having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."[1]

Newberry, the purchaser of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, best known to the present generation by recollection of their infantine studies,[2] was a man of worth as well as wealth, and the frequent patron of distressed genius. When he completed the bargain, which he probably entered into partly from compassion, partly from deference to Johnson's judgment, he had so little confidence in the value of his purchase, that the *Vicar of Wakefield* remained in manuscript until the publication of the *Traveller* had established the fame of the author.

For this beautiful poem Goldsmith had collected materials during his travels; and a part of it had been actually written in Switzerland, and transmitted from that country to the author's brother, the

1 [" See Croker's Edition of *Boswell*, vol. i., p. 429. Mrs Piozzi gives the same anecdote with some variations; among others, that Johnson found Goldsmith with his bottle of Madeira in the *evening*, not the *morning*; and Mr Croker inclines to adopt this more favourable account."]

2 [" Mr John Newberry of St Paul's Churchyard, died in December, 1767. For some account of his life and publications, see Nichols' *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iii., pp. 466 and 731-2."]

Rev. Dr Henry Goldsmith. His distinguished friend, Dr Johnson, aided him with several general hints; and is said to have contributed the sentiment which Goldsmith has so beautifully versified in the concluding lines.

The publication of the *Traveller* gave the author all that celebrity which he had so long laboured to attain. He now assumed the professional dress of the medical science, a scarlet cloak, wig, sword, and cane, and was admitted as a valued member of that distinguished society, which afterwards formed the Literary Club, or as it is more commonly called, emphatically, *The* CLUB. For this he made certain sacrifices, renouncing some of the public places which he had formerly found convenient in point of expense and amusement; not without regret, for he used to say, " In truth, one must make some sacrifices to obtain good society; for here am I shut out of several places where I used to play the fool very agreeably." It often happened amid those sharper wits with whom he now associated, that the simplicity of his character, mingled with an inaccuracy of expression, an undistinguishing spirit of vanity, and a hurriedness of conception, which led him often into absurdity, rendered Dr Goldsmith in some degree the butt of the company. Garrick, in particular, who probably presumed somewhat on the superiority of a theatrical manager over a dramatic author, shot at him many shafts of small epigrammatic wit. It is likely that Goldsmith began to feel that this spirit was carried too far, and, to check it in the best taste, he composed his celebrated poem of *Retalia-*

tion, in which the characters and failings of his associates are drawn with satire, at once pungent and good-humoured. Garrick is smartly chastised; Burke, the Dinner-bell of the House of Commons, is not spared; and of all the more distinguished names of the Club, Johnson, Cumberland, and Reynolds alone escape the lash of the satirist. The former is not mentioned, and the two latter are even dismissed with unqualified and affectionate applause.[1] *Retaliation* had the effect of placing

[1] ["I conclude my account of Goldsmith," says Mr Cumberland, "with gratitude, for the epitaph he bestowed on me in his poem called *Retaliation*. It was upon a proposal started by Edmund Burke, that a party of friends, who had dined together at Sir Joshua Reynolds' and my house, should meet at the St James's Coffee-house, which accordingly took place, and was occasionally repeated with much festivity and good fellowship. Dr Bernard, Dean of Derry, a very amiable and old friend of mine, Dr Douglas, since Bishop of Salisbury, Johnson, David Garrick, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Oliver Goldsmith, Edmund, and Richard Burke, Hickey, with two or three others, constituted our party. At one of these meetings an idea was suggested of extemporary epitaphs upon the parties present; pen and ink were called for, and Garrick off hand wrote an epitaph with a good deal of humour upon poor Goldsmith, who was the first in jest, as he proved to be in reality, that we committed to the grave. The dean also gave him an epitaph, and Sir Joshua illuminated the dean's verses with a sketch of his bust in pen and ink, inimitably caricatured. Neither Johnson nor Burke wrote any thing, and when I perceived that Oliver was rather sore, and seemed to watch me with that kind of attention which indicated his expectation of something in the same kind of burlesque with theirs, I thought it time to press the joke no further, and wrote a few couplets at a side-table, which, when I had finished, and was called upon by the company to exhibit, Goldsmith, with much agitation, besought me to spare him, and I was about to tear them, when Johnson wrested them out of my hand, and, in a loud voice, read them at the table.

the author on a more equal footing with his society than he had ever before assumed. Even against the despotism of Johnson, though much respecting him, and as much beloved by him, Goldsmith made a more spirited stand than was generally ventured upon by the compeers of that arbitrary Sultan of literature. Of this Boswell has recorded a striking instance. Goldsmith had been descanting on the difficulty and importance of making animals in an apologue speak in character, and particularly instanced the Fable of the Little Fishes. Observing that Doctor Johnson was laughing scornfully, he proceeded smartly; "Why, Dr Johnson, this is not so easy as you seem to think; for if *you* were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like whales."

To support the expense of his new dignities, Goldsmith laboured incessantly at the literary oar. The *Letters on the History of England*, commonly ascribed to Lord Lyttleton, and containing an excellent and entertaining abridgement of the annals of Britain, are the work of Goldsmith. His mode of compiling them we learn from some interesting

I have now lost all recollection of them, and, in fact, they were little worth remembering, but, as they were serious and complimentary, the effect upon Goldsmith was the more pleasing, for being so entirely unexpected. The concluding line, which is the only one I can call to mind, was—

'All mourn the poet, I lament the man.'

This I recollect, because he repeated it several times, and seemed much gratified by it. At our next meeting he produced his epitaphs, as they stand in the little posthumous poem above mentioned, and this was the last time he ever enjoyed the company of his friends." — *Memoirs*, vol. i., p. 369 71.]

anecdotes of the author, communicated to the public by Lee Lewes, an actor of genius, whom he patronised, and with whom he often associated.

"He first read in a morning, from Hume, Rapin, and sometimes Kennet, as much as he designed for one letter, marking down the passages referred to on a sheet of paper, with remarks. He then rode or walked out with a friend or two, whom he constantly had with him; returned to dinner, spent the day generally convivially, without much drinking (which he was never in the habit of), and when he went up to bed, took up his books and paper with him, where he generally wrote the chapter, or the best part of it, before he went to rest. This latter exercise cost him very little trouble, he said; for having all his materials ready for him, he wrote it with as much facility as a common letter.

"But of all his compilations, he used to say, his *Selections of English Poetry* showed more, 'the art of profession.' Here he did nothing but mark the particular passages with a red-lead pencil, and for this he got *two hundred pounds*—but then he used to add, 'a man shows his judgment in these selections, and he may be often twenty years of his life cultivating that judgment.'"

Goldsmith, amid these more petty labours, aspired to the honours of the sock, and the *Good-Natured Man* was produced at Covent Garden, 29th January, 1768, with the moderate success of nine nights' run.[1] The principal character the au-

[1] ["The business of painting our manners and lashing our vices has been truly in the hands of our novelists ever since Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne, produced their strong and

thor probably drew from the weak side of his own; for no man was more liable than Goldsmith to be gulled by pretended friends. The character ot Croaker, highly comic in itself, and admirably represented by Shuter, helped to save the piece, which was endangered by the scene of the bailiffs, then considered as too vulgar for the stage. Upon the whole, however, Goldsmith is said to have cleared five hundred pounds by this dramatic performance. He hired better chambers in the Temple, embarked more boldly in literary speculation, and unfortunately at the same time enlarged his ideas ot expense, and indulged his habit of playing at games of hazard. The Memoirs, or Anecdotes, which we have before quoted, give a minute and curious description of his habits and enjoyments about this period, when he was constantly occupied with extracts, abridgements, and other arts of book-making, but at the same time working slowly, and in secret, on those immortal verses, which secure for him so high a rank among English poets.

graphic delineations. These men were to their own times what Johnson and his brother moralists had been to a preceding age, and what the Wycherleys and Vanburghs had not been to another. They have been succeeded by a long line of writers in the same walk, vastly inferior, for the most part, to them in genius, but exerting infinitely greater power each over his own day, than any dramatist that has appeared among us within the period, if we except the brilliant usurpation of Foote, the *hundred days* of the dramatized lampoon. Even when the same writer has tried both walks with success, it is easy to see in which success has been best rewarded. What is the *Good-Natured Man* to the *Vicar of Wakefield*? Not very much more than *Tom Thumb* is to *Tom Jones*."—*Quarterly Review*, Sept. 1826.]

"Goldsmith, though quick enough at prose," continues Mr Lewes, "was rather slow in his poetry—not from the tardiness of fancy, but the time he took in pointing the sentiment, and polishing the versification. He was, by his own confession, four or five years collecting materials in all his country excursions for this poem, (*The Deserted Village*,) and was actually engaged in the construction of it above two years. His manner of writing poetry was this; he first sketched a part of his design in prose, in which he threw out his ideas as they occurred to him; he then sat carefully down to versify them, correct them, and add such other ideas as he thought better fitted to the subject. He sometimes would exceed his prose design by writing several verses impromptu, but these he would take uncommon pains afterwards to revise, lest they should be found unconnected with his main design.

"The writer of these Memoirs" (Lee Lewes) "called upon the Doctor the second morning after he had begun *The Deserted Village*, and to him he communicated the plan of his poem. 'Some of my friends,' continued he, 'differ with me on this plan, and think this depopulation of villages does not exist—but I am myself satisfied of the fact. I remember it in my own country, and have seen it in this.' He then read what he had done of it that morning, beginning,

> 'Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
> Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
> How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
> Where humble happiness endear'd each scene!
> How often have I paused on every charm,—
> The shelter'd cot,—the cultivated farm,—
> The never-failing brook,—the busy mill,—
> The decent church, that topt the neighbouring hill,—
> The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
> For talking age and whispering lovers made.'

'Come,' says he, 'let me tell you this is no bad morning's work; and now, my dear boy, if you are not better engaged, I should be glad to enjoy a *Shoemaker's holiday* with you.' This *Shoemaker's holiday* was a day of great festivity to poor Goldsmith, and was spent in the following innocent manner:—

"Three or four of his intimate friends rendezvoused at his chambers, to breakfast, about ten o'clock in the morning; at eleven they proceeded by the City-Road, and through the fields to Highbury Barn to dinner; about six o'clock in the evening they adjourned to White Conduit House to drink

tea; and concluded the evening by supping at the Grecian or Temple Exchange Coffee-houses, or at the Globe, in Fleet Street. There was a very good ordinary of two dishes and pastry kept at Highbury Barn about this time (five-and-twenty years ago, in 1796) at 10d. per head, including a penny to the waiter, and the company generally consisted of literary characters, a few Templars, and some citizens who had left off trade. The whole expenses of this day's fête never exceeded a crown, and oftener from three-and-sixpence to four shillings, for which the party obtained good air and exercise, good living, the example of simple manners, and good conversation."

The reception given to the *Deserted Village*, so full of natural elegance, simplicity, and pathos, was of the warmest kind.[1] The publisher showed at once his skill and generosity, by pressing upon Doctor Goldsmith a hundred pounds, which the

[1] [" Pleasing as Goldsmith is, it is impossible to ascribe variety to his poetical character: and Dr Johnson has justly remarked something of an echoing resemblance of tone and sentiment between the *Traveller* and *Deserted Village*. But the latter is certainly an improvement on its predecessor. The field of contemplation in the *Traveller* is rather desultory. The other poem has an endearing locality, and introduces us to beings with whom the imagination contracts an intimate friendship. Fiction in poetry is not the reverse of truth, but her soft and enchanted resemblance; and this ideal beauty of nature has been seldom united with so much sober fidelity as in the groups and scenery of the *Deserted Village*. His chaste pathos makes him an insinuating moralist, and throws a charm of Claude-like softness over his descriptions of homely objects that would seem only fit to be the subjects of Dutch painting. But his quiet enthusiasm leads the affections to humble things without a vulgar association: and he inspires us with a fondness to trace the simplest recollections of Auburn, till we count the furniture of its ale-house, and listen to

'The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door.'"

CAMPBELL.]

author insisted upon returning, when upon computation he found that it came to nearly a crown for every couplet, a sum which he conceived no couplet could be worth. The sale of the poem made him ample amends for this unusual instance of moderation. Lissoy, near Ballymahon, where his brother the clergyman had his living, claims the honour of being the spot from which the localities of the *Deserted Village* were derived. The church which tops the neighbouring hill, the mill, and the lake, are still pointed out; and a hawthorn has suffered the penalty of poetical celebrity, being cut to pieces by those admirers of the bard, who desired to have classical tooth-pick cases and tobacco-stoppers. Much of this supposed locality may be fanciful, but it is a pleasing tribute to the poet in the land of his fathers.

Goldsmith's *Abridgements of the History of Rome and England* may here be noticed. They are eminently well calculated to introduce youth to the knowledge of their studies; for they exhibit the most interesting and striking events, without entering into controversy or dry detail. Yet the tone assumed in the *History of England* drew on the author the resentment of the more zealous Whigs, who accused him of betraying the liberties of the people, when, "God knows," as he expresses himself in a letter to Langton, "I had no thought for or against liberty in my head; my whole aim being to make up a book of a decent size, and which, as Squire Richard says, would do no harm to nobody."

His celebrated play of *She Stoops to Conquer*,

was Goldsmith's next work of importance. If it be the object of comedy to make an audience laugh, Johnson says that it was better obtained by this play than by any other of the period.[1] Lee Lewes was, for the first time, produced in a speaking character, as young Marlow, and is, therefore, entitled to record his own recollections concerning the piece.

"The first night of its performance, Goldsmith, instead of being at the Theatre, was found sauntering, between seven and eight o'clock, in the Mall, St James's Park; and it was on the remonstrance of a friend, who told him 'how useful his presence might be in making some sudden alterations which might be found necessary in the piece,' that he was prevailed on to go to the Theatre. He entered the stage-door just in the middle of the fifth act, when there was a hiss at the improbability of Mrs Hardcastle supposing herself forty miles off, though on her own grounds, and near the house. 'What's that?' says the Doctor, terrified at the sound. 'Pshaw, Doctor,' says Colman, who was standing by the side of the scene, 'don't be fearful of *squibs*, when we have been sitting almost these two hours upon a barrel of gunpowder.'

"In the *Life of Dr Goldsmith*, prefixed to his *Works*, the above reply of Colman's is said to have happened at the last rehearsal of the piece, but the fact was (I had it from the Doctor himself) as I have stated, and he never forgave it to Colman to the last hour of his life."

It may be here noticed, that the leading incident of the piece was borrowed from a blunder of the author himself, who, while travelling in Ireland, actually mistook a gentleman's residence for an inn. It is remarkable enough that we ourselves

[1] [For a humorous account of the first performance of this play, see *Cumberland's Memoirs*, vol. i., p. 365-9.]

are acquainted with another instance of the kind, which took place, however, in the middle rank of life.

It must be owned, that however kind, amiable, and benevolent Goldsmith showed himself to his contemporaries, more especially to such as needed his assistance, he had no small portion of the jealous and irritable spirit proper to the literary profession. He suffered a newspaper lampoon about this time to bring him into a foolish affray with Evans the editor, which did him but little credit.[1]

In the meantime, a neglect of economy, occasional losses at play, and too great a reliance on his own versatility and readiness of talent, had considerably embarrassed his affairs. He felt the pressure of many engagements, for which he had received advances of money, and which it was, nevertheless, impossible for him to carry on with that despatch, which the booksellers thought themselves entitled to expect. One of his last publications was a *History of the Earth and Animated Nature*, in six volumes, which is to science what his abridgements are to history; a book which indicates no depth of research, or accuracy of information, but which presents to the ordinary reader a general and interesting view of the subject, couched in the clearest and most beautiful language, and abounding with excellent reflections and

[1] [Evans, a bookseller, received personal chastisement at the hands of Goldsmith, who afterwards published a rather pompous apology for this violence in the newspapers. See a conversation on the subject in *Boswell*, Croker's edition, vol. ii., p. 197. See also D'Israeli's *Calamities of Authors*, vol. ii., p. 84.]

illustrations. It was of this work that Johnson threw out the remark which he afterwards interwove in his friend's epitaph,—"He is now writing a Natural History, and will make it as agreeable as a Persian Tale."

But the period of his labours was now near. Goldsmith had for some time been subject to fits of the strangury, brought on by too severe application to sedentary labours; and one of those attacks, aggravated by mental distress, produced a fever. In spite of cautions to the contrary, he had recourse to Dr James's fever powders, from which he received no relief. He died on the 4th April, 1774, and was privately interred in the Temple burial-ground. A monument, erected by subscription in Westminster-Abbey, bears a Latin inscription from the pen of Dr Johnson:—

OLIVARI GOLDSMITH,
Poetæ, Physici, Historici,
Qui nullum fere scribendi genus non tetigit,
Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit,
Sive risus essent movendi,
Sive lacrymæ,
Affectuum potens at lenis dominator.
Ingenio, sublimis, vividus, versatilis;
Oratione, grandis, nitidus, venustus.
Hoc monumentum Memoriam colent
Sodalium amor,
Amicorum fides,
Lectorum veneratio.
Natus in Hibernia Ferniæ Longfordiensis,
In loco cui nomen Pallas,
Nov. XXIX. MDCCXXXI,
Eblanæ literis institutus,
Obiit Londini,
April IV. MDCCLXXIV.

This elegant epitaph was the subject of a petition to Dr Johnson, in the form of a round robin, entreating him to substitute an English inscription, as more proper for an author who had distinguished himself entirely by works written in English; but the Doctor kept his purpose.

The person and features of Dr Goldsmith were rather unfavourable. He was a short stout man, with a round face, much marked with the small-pox, and a low forehead, which is represented as projecting in a singular manner. Yet these ordinary features were marked by a strong expression of reflection and of observation.

The peculiarities of Goldsmith's disposition have been already touched upon in the preceding narrative. He was a friend to virtue, and in his most playful pages never forgets what is due to it. A gentleness, delicacy, and purity of feeling, distinguishes whatever he wrote, and bears a correspondence to the generosity of a disposition which knew no bounds but his last guinea. It was an attribute almost essential to such a temper, that he wanted the proper guards of firmness and decision, and permitted, even when aware of their worthlessness, the intrusions of cunning and of effrontery. The story of the *White Mice* is well known; and in the humorous *History of the Haunch of Venison*, Goldsmith has recorded another instance of his being duped. This could not be entirely out of simplicity; for he, who could so well embody and record the impositions of Master Jenkinson, might surely have penetrated the schemes of more ordinary swindlers. But Goldsmith could not give a

refusal; and, being thus cheated with his eyes open, no man could be a surer or easier victim to the impostors, whose arts he could so well describe. He might certainly have accepted the draught on neighbour Flamborough, and indubitably would have made the celebrated bargain of the gross of green spectacles. With this cullibility of temper was mixed a hasty and eager jealousy of his own personal consequence: he unwillingly admitted that any thing was done better than he himself could have performed it; and sometimes made himself ridiculous by hastily undertaking to distinguish himself upon subjects which he did not understand. But with these weaknesses, and with that of carelessness in his own affairs, terminates all that censure can say of Goldsmith. The folly of submitting to imposition may be well balanced with the universality of his benevolence; and the wit which his writings evince, more than counterbalances his defects in conversation, if these could be of consequence to the present and future generations.

"As a writer," says Dr Johnson, "he was of the most distinguished class. Whatever he composed, he did it better than any other man could. And whether we regard him as a poet, as a comic writer, or as a historian, he was one of the first writers of his time, and will ever stand in the foremost class."

Excepting some short Tales, Goldsmith gave to the department of the novelist only one work—the inimitable *Vicar of Wakefield.* We have seen that it was suppressed for nearly two years, until the publication of the *Traveller* had fixed the author's fame. Goldsmith had, therefore, time for revisal, but he did not employ it. He had been paid

for his labour, as he observed, and could have profited nothing by rendering the work ever so perfect. This, however, was false reasoning, though not unnatural in the mouth of the author who must earn daily bread by daily labour. The narrative, which in itself is as simple as possible, might have been cleared of certain improbabilities, or rather impossibilities, which it now exhibits. We cannot, for instance, conceive how Sir William Thornhill should contrive to masquerade under the name of Burchell among his own tenantry, and upon his own estate; and it is absolutely impossible to see how his nephew, the son, doubtless, of a younger brother, (since Sir William inherited both title and property,) should be nearly as old as the Baronet himself. It may be added, that the character of Burchell, or Sir William Thornhill, is in itself extravagantly unnatural. A man of his benevolence would never have so long left his nephew in the possession of wealth which he employed to the worst of purposes. Far less would he have permitted his scheme upon Olivia in a great measure to succeed, and that upon Sophia also to approach consummation; for, in the first instance, he does not interfere at all, and in the second, his intervention is accidental. These, and some other little circumstances in the progress of the narrative, might easily have been removed upon revisal.

But whatever defects occur in the tenor of the story, the admirable ease and grace of the narrative, as well as the pleasing truth with which the principal characters are designed, make the *Vicar of Wakefield* one of the most delicious morsels of

fictitious composition on which the human mind was ever employed.[1] The principal character, that of the simple Pastor himself, with all the worth and excellency which ought to distinguish the ambassador of God to man, and yet with just so much of pedantry and literary vanity as serves to show that he is made of mortal mould, and subject to human failings, is one of the best and most pleasing pictures ever designed. It is perhaps impossible to place frail humanity before us in an attitude of more simple dignity than the Vicar, in his character of pastor, of parent, and of husband. His excellent helpmate, with all her motherly cunning, and housewifely prudence, loving and respecting her husband, but counterplotting his wisest schemes, at the dictates of maternal vanity, forms an excellent counterpart. Both, with their children around them, their quiet labour and domestic happiness, compose a fireside picture of such a perfect kind, as perhaps is nowhere else equalled. It is sketched indeed from common life, and is a strong contrast to the exaggerated and extraordinary characters and incidents which are the resource of those authors, who, like Bayes, make it their business to elevate and surprise; but the very simplicity of this charming book renders the pleasure it affords more permanent. We read

[1] ["I have found, however, one point where the German (Schlegel) is right—it is about the *Vicar of Wakefield.* 'Of all romances in miniature (and perhaps this is the best shape in which romance can appear) the *Vicar of Wakefield* is, I think, the most exquisite:' He thinks!—he might be sure."—BYRON, vol. v., p. 93.]

the *Vicar of Wakefield* in youth and in age—We return to it again and again, and bless the memory of an author who contrives so well to reconcile us to human nature. Whether we choose the pathetic and distressing incidents of the fire, the scenes at the jail, or the lighter and humorous parts of the story, we find the best and truest sentiments enforced in the most beautiful language; and perhaps there are few characters of purer dignity have been described than that of the excellent pastor, rising above sorrow and oppression, and labouring for the conversion of those felons, into whose company he had been thrust by his villanous creditor. In too many works of this class, the critics must apologize for or censure particular passages in the narrative, as unfit to be perused by youth and innocence. But the wreath of Goldsmith is unsullied; he wrote to exalt virtue and expose vice; and he accomplished his task in a manner which raises him to the highest rank among British authors. We close his volume, with a sigh that such an author should have written so little from the stores of his own genius,[1] and

[1] [Mr Cumberland says, "Distress drove Goldsmith upon undertakings, neither congenial with his studies, nor worthy of his talents. I remember him, when, in his chamber in the Temple, he showed me the beginning of his *Animated Nature*; it was with a sigh, such as genius draws when hard necessity diverts it from its bent to drudge for bread, and talk of birds and beasts and creeping things, which Pidcock's showman would have done as well. Poor fellow, he hardly knew an ass from a mule, nor a turkey from a goose, but when he saw it on the table. But publishers hate poetry, and Paternoster-Row is not Parnassus. Even the mighty Dr Hill, who was not a very delicate feeder, could not make a dinner out of the press, till by a happy transformation into Hannah Glass, he

that he should have been so prematurely removed from the sphere of literature, which he so highly adorned.

turned himself into a cook, and sold receipts for made dishes to all the savoury readers in the kingdom. Then, indeed, the press acknowledged him second in fame only to John Bunyan —his feasts kept pace in sale with Nelson's fasts; and when his own name was fairly written out of credit, he wrote himself into an immortality under an alias. Now, though necessity, or, I should rather say, the desire of finding money for a masquerade, drove Oliver Goldsmith upon abridging histories, and turning Buffon into English, yet I much doubt if without that spur he would ever have put his Pegasus into action; no, if he had been rich the world would have been poorer than it is, by the loss of all the treasures of his genius and the contributions of his pen."—*Memoirs*, vol. i., p. 352.]

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

Of all the men distinguished in this or any other age, Dr Johnson has left upon posterity the strongest and most vivid impression, so far as person, manners, disposition, and conversation, are concerned. We do but name him, or open a book which he has written, and the sound and action recall to the imagination at once, his form, his merits, his peculiarities, nay, the very uncouthness of his gestures, and the deep impressive tone of his voice. We learn not only what he said, but form an idea how he said it; and have, at the same time, a shrewd guess of the secret motive why he did so, and whether he spoke in sport or in anger, in the desire of conviction, or for the love of debate. It was said of a noted wag, that his bon-mots did not give full satisfaction when published, because he could not print his face. But with respect to Dr Johnson, this has been in some degree accomplished; and, although the greater part of the present generation never saw him, yet he is, in our mind's eye, a personification as lively as that of Siddons in *Lady Macbeth*, or Kemble in *Cardinal Wolsey*.

All this, as the world well knows, arises from Johnson having found in James Boswell such a biographer, as no man but himself ever had, or ever

deserved to have. The performance, which chiefly resembles it in structure, is the life of the philosopher Demophon, in Lucian; but that slight sketch is far inferior in detail and in vivacity to Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, which, considering the eminent persons to whom it relates, the quantity of miscellaneous information and entertaining gossip which it brings together, may be termed, without exception, the best parlour-window book that ever was written. Accordingly, such has been the reputation which it has enjoyed, that it renders useless even the form of an abridgement, which is the less necessary in this work, as the great Lexicographer only stands connected with the department of fictitious narrative by the brief tale of *Rasselas*.

A few dates and facts may be shortly recalled, for the sake of uniformity of plan, after which we will venture to offer a few remarks upon *Rasselas*, and the character of its great author.

Samuel Johnson was born and educated in Litchfield, where his father was a country bookseller of some eminence, since he belonged to its magistracy. He was born 18th September, 1709. His school-days were spent in his native city, and his education completed at Pembroke College, Oxford. Of gigantic strength of body, and mighty powers of mind, he was afflicted with that nameless disease on the spirits, which often rendered the latter useless;[1] and externally deformed by a scrofulous

[1] [" Mr Michael Johnson was a man of a large and robust body, and of a strong and active mind; yet, as in the most solid rocks, veins of unsound substance are often discovered, there was in him a mixture of that disease, the nature of

complaint, the scars of which disfigured his otherwise strong and sensible countenance.

which eludes the most minute enquiry, though the effects are well known to be a weariness of life, an unconcern about those things which agitate the greater part of mankind, and a general sensation of gloomy wretchedness. From him then his son inherited, with some other qualities, 'a vile melancholy,' which in his too strong expression of any disturbance of the mind 'made him mad all his life, at least not sober.'"—Boswell.

"One of the most curious and important chapters in the history of the human mind is still to be written, that of hereditary insanity. The symptomatic facts by which the disease may be traced, are generally either disregarded from ignorance of their real cause and character, or, when observed, carefully suppressed by domestic or professional delicacy. This is natural and even laudable; yet there are several important reasons why the obscurity in which such facts are usually buried, may be regretted. *Morally*, we should wish to know, as far as may be permitted to us, the nature of our own intellect, its powers and its weaknesses:—*Medically*, it might be possible, by early and systematic treatment, to avert or mitigate the disease, which, there is reason to suppose, is now often unknown or mistaken:—*Legally*, it would be desirable to have any additional means of discriminating between guilt and misfortune, and of ascertaining with more precision the nice bounds which divide moral guilt from physical errors; and in the highest and most important of all the springs of human thought or action, it would be consolatory and edifying to be able to distinguish with greater certainty, rational faith and judicious piety, from the enthusiastic confidence or the gloomy despondence of disordered imaginations. The memory of every man who has lived, not inattentively, in society, will furnish him with instances to which these considerations might have been usefully applied. But in reading the life of Dr Johnson, (who was conscious of the disease and of its cause, and of whose blood there remains no one whose feelings can now be offended,) they should be kept constantly in view; not merely as a subject of general interest, but as elucidating and explaining many of the errors, peculiarities, and weaknesses of that extraordinary man."—Croker.]

The indigence of his parents compelled him to leave College upon his father's death in 1731, when he gathered in a succession of eleven pounds sterling. In poverty, however, his learning and his probity secured him respect. He was received in the best society of his native place. His first literary attempt, the translation of *Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia*, appeared during this period, and probably led him, at a later period, to lay in that remote kingdom the scene of his philosophical tale, which follows this essay. About the same time, he married a wife considerably older than himself, and attempted to set up a school in the neighbourhood of Litchfield. The project proved unsuccessful; and in 1737, he set out to try to mend his fortunes in London, attended by David Garrick. Johnson had with him in manuscript his tragedy of *Irene*, and meant to commence dramatic author; Garrick was to be bred to the law—Fate had different designs for both.

There is little doubt, that upon his outset in London, Johnson felt in full force the ills which assail the unprotected scholar, whose parts are yet unknown to the public, and who must write at once for bread and for distinction.[1] His splendid

1 [" Who would say that Johnson himself would have been such a champion in literature—such a front-rank soldier in the fields of fame, if he had not been pressed into the service, and driven on to glory with the bayonet of sharp necessity pointed at his back? If fortune had turned him into a field of clover, he would have laid down and rolled in it. The mere manual labour of writing would not have allowed his lassitude and love of ease to have taken the pen out of the inkhorn, unless the cravings of hunger had reminded him that he

imitation of Juvenal, *London*, a satire, was the first of his works which drew the attention of the public; yet, neither its celebrity, nor that of its more brilliant successor, the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, the deep and pathetic morality of which has often extracted tears from those whose eyes wander dry over pages professedly sentimental, could save the poet from the irksome drudgery of a writer of all work. His tragedy of *Irene* was unfortunate on the stage, and his valuable hours were consumed in obscure labour. He was fortunate, however, in a strong and virtuous power of thinking, which prevented his plunging into those excesses, in which neglected genius, in catching at momentary gratification, is so apt to lose character and respectability. While his friend, Savage, was wasting considerable powers in temporary gratification, Johnson was advancing slowly but surely into a higher clas of society. The powers of his pen were supported by those of his conversation; he lost no friend by misconduct, no respect by a closer approach to intimacy, and each new friend whom he made, continued still his admirer.

The booksellers, also, were sensible of his value as a literary labourer, and employed him in that laborious and gigantic task, a Dictionary of the language. How it is executed is well known, and sufficiently surprising, considering that the learned author was a stranger to the Northern languages,

must fill the sheet before he saw the tablecloth. He might indeed have knocked down Osbourne for a blockhead, but he would not have knocked him down with a folio of his own writing."—CUMBERLAND.]

on which English is radically grounded, and that the discoveries in grammar, since made by Horne Tooke, were then unknown. In the meantime, the publication of the *Rambler*, though not very successful during its progress, stamped the character of the author as one of the first moral writers of the age, and as eminently qualified to write, and even to improve, the English language.

In 1752, Johnson was deprived of his wife, a loss which he appears to have felt most deeply. After her death, society, the best of which was now open to a man who brought such stores to increase its pleasures, seems to have been his principal enjoyment, and his great resource when assailed by that malady of mind which embittered his solitary moments.

The *Idler*, scarcely so popular as the *Rambler*, followed in 1758. In 1759, *Rasselas* was hastily composed, in order to pay the expenses of his mother's funeral, and some small debts which she had contracted. This beautiful tale was written in one week, and sent in portions to the printer. Johnson told Sir Joshua Reynolds that he never afterwards read it over! The publishers paid the author a hundred pounds, with twenty-four more, when the work came to a second edition.

The mode in which *Rasselas* was composed, and the purposes for which it was written, show that the author's situation was still embarrassed. But his circumstances became more easy in 1762, when a pension of L.300 placed him beyond the drudgery of labouring for mere subsistence. It was distinctly explained, that this grant was made on

public grounds alone, and intended as homage to Johnson's services for literature. But two political pamphlets, *The False Alarm*, and that upon the *Falkland Islands*, afterwards showed that the author was grateful.

In 1765, pushed forward by the satire of Churchill, Johnson published his subscription Shakspeare, for which proposals had been long in circulation.

The author's celebrated *Journey to the Hebrides* was published in 1775. Whatever might be his prejudices against Scotland, its natives must concede, that his remarks concerning the poverty and barrenness of the country, tended to produce those subsequent exertions, which have done much to remedy the causes of reproach. The Scots were angry because Johnson was not enraptured with their scenery, which, from a defect of bodily organs, he could not appreciate, or even see;[1] and they appear to have set rather too high a rate on the hospitality paid to a stranger, when they contended it should shut the mouth of a literary traveller upon all subjects but those of panegyric. Dr Johnson took a better way of repaying the civilities he received, by exercising kindness and hospitality in London to all such friends as he had received attention from in Scotland.

[1] [Miss Reynolds, who knew him longer, and saw him more constantly than Mr Boswell, says, "Dr Johnson's sight was so *very defective*, that he could scarely distinguish the face of his most intimate acquaintance at half a yard; and, in general, it was observable, that his critical remarks on *dress*, &c., were the result of very close inspection of the object, partly from curiosity, and partly from a desire of exciting admiration of his perspicuity, of which he was not a little ambitious."—CROKER, vol. iii., p. 286.]

His pamphlet, entitled *Taxation no Tyranny*, which drew upon him much wrath from those who supported the American cause, is written in a strain of high toryism, and tended to promote an event, pregnant with much good and evil, the separation of the mother country from the American colonies.

In 1777, he was engaged in one of his most pleasing, as well as most popular works, *The Lives of the British Poets*, which he executed with a degree of critical force and talent which has seldom been concentrated.[1]

Johnson's laborious and distinguished career terminated in 1783, when virtue was deprived of a steady supporter, society of a brilliant ornament, and literature of a successful cultivator. The latter part of his life was honoured with general applause, for none was more fortunate in obtaining and preserving the friendship of the wise and the worthy. Thus loved and venerated, Johnson might have been pronounced happy. But Heaven, in whose eyes strength is weakness, permitted his faculties to be clouded occasionally with that morbid affection of the spirits, which disgraced his talents by prejudices, and his manners by rudeness.

When we consider the rank which Dr Johnson held, not only in literature, but in society, we cannot help figuring him to ourselves as the benevolent giant of some fairy tale, whose kindnesses and courtesies are still mingled with a part of the rug-

1 ["Johnson strips many a leaf from every laurel. Still, Johnson's is the finest critical work extant, and can never be read without instruction and delight."—BYRON, vol. vi., p. 376.]

ged ferocity imputed to the fabulous sons of Anak; or rather, perhaps, like a Roman Dictator, fetched from his farm, whose wisdom and heroism still relished of his rustic occupation. And there were times when, with all Johnson's wisdom, and all his wit, this rudeness of disposition, and the sacrifices and submissions which he unsparingly exacted, were so great, that even his kind and devoted admirer, Mrs Thrale, seems at length to have thought that the honour of being Johnson's hostess was almost counterbalanced by the tax which he exacted on her time and patience.

The cause of those deficiencies in temper and manners, was no ignorance of what was fit to be done in society, or how far each individual ought to suppress his own wishes in favour of those with whom he associates; for, theoretically, no man understood the rules of good-breeding better than Dr Johnson, or could act more exactly in conformity with them, when the high rank of those with whom he was in company for the time required that he should put the necessary constraint upon himself. But during the greater part of his life, he had been in a great measure a stranger to the higher society, in which such restraint is necessary; and it may be fairly presumed, that the indulgence of a variety of little selfish peculiarities, which it is the object of good-breeding to suppress, became thus familiar to him. The consciousness of his own mental superiority in most companies which he frequented, contributed to his dogmatism; and when he had attained his eminence as a dictator in literature, like other potentates, he was not averse

to a display of his authority: resembling in this particular Swift, and one or two other men of genius, who have had the bad taste to imagine that their talents elevated them above observance of the common rules of society.[1] It must be also remarked, that in Johnson's time, the literary society of London was much more confined than at present, and that he sat the Jupiter of a little circle, sometimes indeed nodding approbation, but always prompt, on the slightest contradiction, to launch the thunders of rebuke and sarcasm. He was, in a word, despotic, and despotism will occasionally lead the best dispositions into unbecoming abuse of power. It is not likely that any one will again enjoy, or have an opportunity of abusing, the sin-

1 [Sir Walter Scott elsewhere supplies the following anecdote:—"Mr Boswell has chosen to omit, for reasons which will be presently obvious, that Johnson and Adam Smith met at Glasgow; but I have been assured, by Professor John Miller, that they did so, and that Smith, leaving the party where he had met Johnson, happened to come to another where Miller was. Knowing that Smith had been in Johnson's society, they were anxious to know what had passed, and the more so, as Smith's temper seemed much ruffled. At first, Smith would only answer, 'He's a brute—he's a brute;' but, on closer examination, it appeared that Johnson no sooner saw Smith, than he attacked him for some point of his famous letter on the death of Hume. Smith vindicated the truth of his statement. 'What did Johnson say?' was the universal inquiry. 'Why, he said,' replied Smith, with the deepest impression of resentment, 'he said, *you lie!*'—'And what did you reply?'—'I said, you are a son of a ——!' On such terms did these two great moralists meet and part, and such was the classical dialogue between two great teachers of philosophy."—CROKER's *Boswell*, vol. iii., p. 65.]

gular degree of submission which was rendered to Johnson by all around him. The unreserved communications of friends, rather than the spleen of enemies, have occasioned his character being exposed in all its shadows, as well as its lights. But those, when summed and counted, amount only to a few narrow-minded prejudices concerning country and party, from which few ardent tempers remain entirely free, an over-zeal in politics, which is an ordinary attribute of the British character, and some violences and solecisms in manners, which left his talents, morals, and benevolence, alike unimpeachable.[1]

Of *Rasselas*, translated into so many languages, and so widely circulated through the literary world, the merits have been long justly appreciated. It was composed in solitude and sorrow; and the melancholy cast of feeling which it exhibits, sufficiently evinces the temper of the author's mind. The resemblance, in some respects, betwixt the tenor of the moral and that of *Candide*, is striking, and Johnson himself admitted, that if the authors could possibly have seen each other's manuscript, they could not have escaped the charge of plagiarism. But they resemble each other like a

[1] [" To obviate all the reflections which have gone round the world to Johnson's prejudice, by applying to him the epithet of a *bear*, let me impress upon my readers a just and happy saying of my friend Goldsmith, who knew him well:—'Johnson, to be sure, has a roughness in his manner; but no man alive has a more tender heart. *He has nothing of the bear but his skin.*' "—BOSWELL.]

wholesome and a poisonous fruit. The object of the witty Frenchman is to induce a distrust of the wisdom of the great Governor of the Universe, by presuming to arraign him of incapacity before the creatures of his will. Johnson uses arguments drawn from the same premises, with the benevolent view of encouraging men to look to another and a better world, for the satisfaction of wishes, which in this seem only to be awakened in order to be disappointed. The one is a fiend—a merry devil, we grant—who scoffs at and derides human miseries; the other, a friendly though grave philosopher, who shows us the nothingness of earthly hopes, to teach us that our affections ought to be placed higher.

The work can scarce be termed a narrative, being in a great measure void of incident; it is rather a set of moral dialogues on the various vicissitudes of human life, its follies, its fears, its hopes, its wishes, and the disappointment in which all terminate. The style is in Johnson's best manner; enriched and rendered sonorous by the triads and quaternions which he so much loved, and balanced with an art which perhaps he derived from the learned Sir Thomas Brown. The reader may sometimes complain, with Boswell, that the unalleviated picture of human helplessness and misery, leaves sadness upon the mind after perusal. But the moral is to be found in the conclusion of the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, a poem which treats of the same melancholy subject, and closes with this sublime strain of morality :—

"Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
Obedient passions, and a will resign'd;
For Love, which scarce collective man can fil ;
For Patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill;
For Faith, that, panting for a happier seat,
Counts death kind nature's signal of retreat:
These goods for man the laws of Heaven ordain;
These goods He grants, who grants the power to gain
With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness she cannot find."

LAURENCE STERNE.

LAURENCE STERNE was one of those few authors who have anticipated the labours of the biographer, and left to the world what they desired should be known of their family and their life. It is but a slight sketch, however, addressed to his daughter, and stops short just where the reader becomes most interested in its progress, being very succinct in all which regards the author's personal history.

"Roger Sterne,"[1] (says this narrative,) "grandson to Archbishop Sterne, Lieutenant in Handaside's regiment, was married to Agnes Hebert, widow of a captain of a good family. Her family name was (I believe) Nuttle;—though, upon recollection,

[1] Mr Sterne was descended from a family of that name in Suffolk one of which settled in Nottinghamshire. The following genealogy is extracted from Thoresby's Ducatus Leodinensis, p. 215.

SIMON STERNE, of Mansfield.

Dr Richard Sterne, Archbishop of York, ob. June 1683. = Elizabeth, daughter of Mr Dickinson, ob. 1670.

1 Richard Sterne, of York and Kilvington, Esq. 1700.
2 William Sterne, of Mansfield.
3 Simon Sterne, of Elvington and Halifax, ob. 1703. = Mary, daughter and heiress of Roger Jaques, of Elvington, near York.

1 Richard. — Richard.
2 ROGER.
3 Jaques, LL.D. ob. 1759.
4 Mary.
5 Elizabeth.
6 Frances.

LAURENCE STERNE.

that was the name of her father-in-law, who was a noted sutler in Flanders, in Queen Anne's wars, where my father married his wife's daughter, (N. B. he was in debt to him,) which was in September 25, 1711, old style.—This Nuttle had a son by my grandmother,—a fine person of a man, but a graceless whelp!—what became of him I know not.—The family (if any left) live now at Clonmel, in the south of Ireland; at which town I was born, November 24, 1713, a few days after my mother arrived from Dunkirk.—My birthday was ominous to my poor father, who was, the day of our arrival, with many other brave officers, broke, and sent adrift into the wide world, with a wife and two children;—the elder of which was Mary. She was born at Lisle, in French Flanders, July 10, 1712, new style.—This child was the most unfortunate:—She married one Weemans, in Dublin, who used her most unmercifully;—spent his substance, became a bankrupt, and left my poor sister to shift for herself; which she was able to do but for a few months, for she went to a friend's house in the country, and died of a broken heart. She was a most beautiful woman, of a fine figure, and deserved a better fate.—The regiment in which my father served being broke, he left Ireland as soon as I was able to be carried, with the rest of his family, and came to the family-seat at Elvington, near York, where his mother lived. She was daughter to Sir Roger Jacques, and an heiress. There we sojourned for about ten months, when the regiment was established, and our household decamped with bag and baggage for Dublin.—Within a month of our arrival, my father left us, being ordered to Exeter; where, in a sad winter, my mother and her two children followed him, travelling from Liverpool, by land, to Plymouth.—(Melancholy description of this journey not necessary to be transmitted here.)—In twelve months we were all sent back to Dublin.—My mother, with three of us (for she lay-in at Plymouth of a boy, Joram), took ship at Bristol, for Ireland, and had a narrow escape from being cast away, by a leak springing up in the vessel.—At length, after many perils and struggles, we got to Dublin.—There my father took a large house, furnished it, and in a year and a half's time spent a great deal of money. In the year one thousand seven hundred and nineteen, all unhinged again; the regiment was ordered, with many others, to the Isle of Wight, in order to embark for Spain in the Vigo expedition. We accompanied the regiment, and were driven into Milford Haven, but landed at Bristol; from thence, by land, to Plymouth again, and to the Isle of Wight;—where, I remember, we stayed en-

camped some time before the embarkation of the troops—(in this expedition, from Bristol to Hampshire, we lost poor Joram,—a pretty boy, four years old, of the small-pox)—my mother, sister, and myself, remained at the Isle of Wight during the Vigo expedition, and until the regiment had got back to Wicklow, in Ireland; from whence my father sent for us.—We had poor Joram's loss supplied, during our stay in the Isle of Wight, by the birth of a girl, Anne, born September the twenty-third, one thousand seven hundred and nineteen.—This pretty blossom fell at the age of three years, in the barracks of Dublin. She was, as I well remember, of a fine delicate frame, not made to last long,—as were most of my father's babes. We embarked for Dublin, and had all been cast away by a most violent storm; but through the intercessions of my mother, the captain was prevailed upon to turn back into Wales, where we stayed a month, and at length got into Dublin, and travelled by land to Wicklow: where my father had for some weeks given us over for lost. We lived in the barracks at Wicklow one year—(one thousand seven hundred and twenty) when Devijeher (so called after Colonel Devijeher) was born; from thence we decamped to stay half a year with Mr Featherston, a clergyman, about seven miles from Wicklow; who, being a relation of my mother's, invited us to his parsonage at Animo.[1] It was in this parish, during our stay, that I had that wonderful escape in falling through a mill-race whilst the mill was going, and of being taken up unhurt; the story is incredible, but known for truth in all that part of Ireland, where hundreds of the common people flocked to see me. From hence we followed the regiment to Dublin, where we lay in the barracks a year. In this year (one thousand seven hundred and twenty-one) I learnt to write, &c. The regiment ordered in twenty-two to Carrickfergus, in the north of Ireland. We all decamped; but got no further than Drogheda; thence ordered to Mullengar, forty miles west, where, by Providence, we stumbled upon a kind relation, a collateral descendant from Archbishop Sterne, who took us all to his castle, and kindly entertained us for a year, and sent us to the regiment to Carrickfergus, loaded with kindnesses, &c. A

[1] This village, or rather hamlet, is within a few miles of the romantic lake called Glandelow, on which are to be seen the singularly interesting ecclesiastical antiquities, called the Seven Churches. The mill where Sterne encountered this remarkable risk has been only lately destroyed; and his escape still lives in village tradition.

most rueful and tedious journey had we all (in March) to Carrickfergus, where we arrived in six or seven days. — Little Devijeher here died; he was three years old; he had been left behind at nurse at a farm-house near Wicklow, but was fetched to us by my father the summer after:—another child sent to fill his place, Susan. This babe, too, left us behind in this weary journey. The autumn of that year, or the spring afterwards, (I forget which,) my father got leave of his colonel to fix me at school,—which he did near Halifax, with an able master; with whom I stayed some time, till, by God's care of me, my cousin Sterne, of Elvington, became a father to me, and sent me to the university, &c. &c. To pursue the thread of our story, my father's regiment was, the year after, ordered to Londonderry, where another sister was brought forth, Catherine, still living; but most unhappily estranged from me by my uncle's wickedness and her own folly. From this station the regiment was sent to defend Gibraltar, at the siege, where my father was run through the body by Captain Phillips, in a duel (the quarrel began about a goose)!; with much difficulty he survived, though with an impaired constitution, which was not able to withstand the hardships it was put to; for he was sent to Jamaica, where he soon fell by the country fever, which took away his senses first, and made a child of him; and then, in a month or two, walking about continually without complaining, till the moment he sat down in an arm-chair, and breathed his last, which was at Port Antonio, on the north of the island. My father was a little smart man, active to the last degree in all exercises, most patient of fatigue and disappointments, of which it pleased God to give him full measure. He was, in his temper, somewhat rapid and hasty, but of a kindly sweet disposition, void of all design; and so innocent in his own intentions, that he suspected no one; so that you might have cheated him ten times in a day, if nine had not been sufficient for your purpose. My poor father died in March, 1731. I remained at Halifax till about the latter end of that year, and cannot omit mentioning this anecdote of myself and schoolmaster:—He had the ceiling of the school-room new whitewashed; the ladder remained there. I, one unlucky day, mounted it, and wrote with a brush, in large capital letters, LAU. STERNE, for which the usher severely whipped me. My master was very much hurt at this, and said, before me, that never should that name be effaced, for I was a boy of genius, and he was sure I should come to preferment. This expression made me forget the stripes I had received. In the

year thirty-two[1] my cousin sent me to the university, where I staid some time. 'Twas there that I commenced a friendship with Mr H——, which has been lasting on both sides. I then came to York, and my uncle got me the living of Sutton; and at York I became acquainted with your mother, and courted her for two years:—she owned she liked me, but thought herself not rich enough, or me too poor, to be joined together. She went to her sister's in S——; and I wrote to her often. I believe then she was partly determined to have me, but would not say so. At her return she fell into a consumption;—and one evening that I was sitting by her, with an almost broken heart to see her so ill, she said, 'My dear Laurey, I never can be yours, for I verily believe I have not long to live! but I have left you every shilling of my fortune.' Upon that she showed me her will. This generosity overpowered me. It pleased God that she recovered, and I married her in the year 1741. My uncle[2] and myself were then upon very good terms; for he soon got me the Prebendary of York;—but he quarrelled with me afterwards, because I would not write paragraphs in the newspapers;—though he was a party man, I was not, and detested such dirty work, thinking it beneath me. From that period he became my bitterest enemy.[3] By my wife's means I got the living of Stillington; a friend of hers in the south had promised her, that, if she married a clergyman in Yorkshire, when the living became vacant, he would make her a compliment of it. I remained near twenty years at Sutton, doing duty at both places. I had then very good health. Books, painting,[4] fiddling, and shooting, were my amusements. As to the Squire of the parish, I cannot say we were on a very friendly footing; but at Stillington, the family of the C——s showed us every kindness: 'twas most truly agree-

[1] He was admitted of Jesus College, in the University of Cambridge, 6th July, 1733, under the tuition of Mr Cannon.

Matriculated 29th March, 1735.

Admitted to the degree of B. A. in January, 1736.

Admitted M.A. at the commencement of 1740.

[2] Jaques Sterne, LL.D. He was Prebendary of Durham, Canon Residentiary, Precentor, and Prebendary of York, Rector of Rise, and Rector of Hornsey cum Riston, both in the East Riding of the county of York. He died June 9th, 1759.

[3] It hath, however, been insinuated, that he for some time wrote a periodical electioneering paper at York, in defence of the Whig interest.—*Monthly Review*, vol. liii., p. 344.

[4] A specimen of Mr Sterne's abilities in the art of designing, may be seen in Mr Wodhul's Poems, 8vo, 1772.

able to be within a mile and a half of an amiable family, who were ever cordial friends. In the year 1760, I took a house at York for your mother and yourself, and went up to London to publish [1] my two first volumes of Shandy. [2] In that year Lord Falconbridge presented me with the curacy of Coxwould; a sweet retirement in comparison of Sutton. In sixty-two I went to France before the peace was concluded; and you both followed me. I left you both in France, and in two years after, I went to Italy for the recovery of my health; and, when I called upon you, I tried to engage your mother to return to England with me: [3] she and yourself are at length come, and I have had the inexpressible joy of seeing my girl every thing I wished for.

"*I have set down these particulars relating to my family and self for my Lydia, in case hereafter she might have a curiosity, or a kinder motive, to know them.*"

To these notices, the following brief account of his death has been added by another writer:—

"As Mr Sterne, in the foregoing, hath brought down the account of himself until within a few months of his death, it remains only to mention, that he left York about the end of the year 1767, and came to London, in order to publish *The Sentimental Journey*, which he had written during the preceding sum-

[1] The first edition was printed in the preceding year at York.

[2] The following is the order in which Mr Sterne's publications appeared:—

1747. The Case of Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath considered. A Charity Sermon preached on Good Friday, April 17, 1747, for the support of two charity schools in York.

1750. The Abuses of Conscience. Set forth in a sermon preached in the cathedral church of St Peter, York, at the Summer Assizes before the Hon. Mr Baron Clive, and the Hon. Mr Baron Smythe, on Sunday, July 29, 1750.

1759. Vol. 1 and 2 of Tristram Shandy.
1760. Vol. 1 and 2 of Sermons.
1761. Vol. 3 and 4 of Tristram Shandy.
1762. Vol. 5 and 6 of Tristram Shandy.
1765. Vol. 7 and 8 of Tristram Shandy.
1766. Vols. 3, 4, 5, and 6 of Sermons.
1767. Vol. 9 of Tristram Shandy.
1768. The Sentimental Journey.

The remainder of his works were published after his death.

[3] From this passage, it appears that the present account of Mr Sterne's Life and Family was written about six months only before his death.

mer at his favourite living of Coxwould. His health had been for some time declining; but he continued to visit his friends, and retained his usual flow of spirits. In February, 1768, he began to perceive the approaches of death; and with the concern of a good man, and the solicitude of an affectionate parent, devoted his attention to the future welfare of his daughter. His letters, at this period, reflect so much credit on his character, that it is to be lamented some others in the collection were permitted to see the light. After a short struggle with his disorder, his debilitated and worn-out frame submitted to fate on the 18th day of March, 1768, at his lodgings in Bond Street. He was buried at the new burying-ground belonging to the parish of St George, Hanover Square, on the 22d of the same month, in the most private manner; and hath since been indebted to strangers for a monument very unworthy of his memory; on which the following lines are inscribed:—

Near to this Place
Lies the Body of
The Reverend LAURENCE STERNE, A.M.
Died September 13, 1768,
Aged 53 Years.[1]

To these Memoirs we can only add a few circumstances. The Archbishop of York, referred to as great-grandfather of the author, was Dr Richard Sterne, who died in June, 1683. The family came from Suffolk to Nottinghamshire, and are described by Guillam as bearing Or a cheveron, between three crosses flory sable. The crest is that Starling proper, which might incur the censure of a zealous herald. It is a pun upon *Estourneau*, the French for a starling, as approaching to the proper name Sterne. This may be termed *canting*, in the armorial language, but the pen of Yorick has rendered it immortal.

[1] It is scarcely necessary to observe, that this date is erroneous.

Sterne was educated at Jesus College, Cambridge, and took the degree of Master of Arts there in 1740. His protector and patron, in the outset of life, was his uncle Dr Jaques Sterne, who was Prebendary of Durham, Canon Residentiary, Precentor, and Prebendary of York, with other good preferments. Dr Sterne was a keen Whig, and zealous supporter of the Hanoverian succession. The politics of the times being extremely violent, he was engaged in many controversies, particularly with Dr Richard Burton, a surgeon and man-midwife, whom he had arrested upon a charge of high treason, during the affair of 1745. Laurence Sterne, in the Memoir which precedes these notices, represents himself as having quarrelled with his uncle, because he would not assist him with his pen in controversies of this description; yet there is reason to believe he adopted his kinsman's enmities in some degree, since he consigned Dr Burton to painful immortality, under the name of Dr Slop.

When settled in Yorkshire, Sterne has represented his time as much engaged with books, music, and painting. The former seems to have been in a great measure supplied by the library of Skelton Castle, the abode of his intimate friend and relation, John Hall Stevenson, author of the witty and indecent collection, entitled *Crazy Tales*, where there is a very humorous description of his ancient residence, under the name of Crazy Castle. This library had the same cast of antiquity which belonged to the Castle itself, and doubtless contained much of that rubbish of ancient literature

in which the labour and ingenuity of Sterne contrived to find a mine. Until 1759, Sterne had only printed two Sermons; but in that year he surprised the world, by publishing the two first volumes of *Tristram Shandy*. Sterne states himself, in a letter to a friend, as being "tired of employing his brains for other people's advantage—a foolish sacrifice I have made for some years to an ungrateful person."—This passage probably alludes to his quarrel with his uncle; and as he mentions having taken a small house in York for the education of his daughter, it is probable that he looked to his pen for some assistance, though, in a letter to a nameless doctor, who had accused him of writing in order to have *nummum in loculo*, he declares he wrote, not to be fed, but to be famous. *Tristram*, however, procured the author both fame and profit. The brilliant genius, which mingled with so much real or affected eccentricity, the gaping astonishment of the readers who could not conceive the drift or object of the publication, with the ingenuity of those who attempted to discover the meaning of passages which really had none, gave the book a most extraordinary degree of eclat. But the applause of the public was not unmingled with censure. Sterne was not on good terms with his professional brethren: he had too much wit, and too little forbearance in the use of it; too much vivacity, and too little respect for his cloth and character, to maintain the formalities, or even the decencies, of the clerical station; and, moreover, he had, in the full career of his humour, assigned to some of his grave compeers ridiculous epithets and

characters, which they did not resent the less, that they were certainly witty, and probably applicable. Indeed, to require a person to pardon an insult on account of the wit which accompanies the infliction, although it is what jesters often seem to expect, is as reasonable as to desire a wounded man to admire the painted feathers which wing the dart by which he is pierced. The tumult was loud on all sides; but amid shouts of applause and cries of censure, the notoriety of *Tristram* spread still wider and wider, and the fame of Sterne rose in proportion. The author therefore triumphed, and bid the critics defiance.

"I shall be attacked and pelted," he says, in one of his letters, "either from cellar or garret, write what I will; and, besides, must expect to have a party against me of many hundreds, who either do not, or will not, laugh—'tis enough that I divide the world—at least I will rest contented with it."

On another occasion he says,—

"If my enemies knew that, by this rage of abuse and ill will, they were effectually serving the interests both of myself and works, they would be more quiet; but it has been the fate of my betters, who have found that the way to fame is like the way to heaven, through much tribulation; and till I shall have the honour to be as much maltreated as Rabelais and Swift were, I must continue humble, for I have not filled up the measure of half their persecutions."

The author went to London to enjoy his fame, and met with all that attention which the public gives to men of notoriety. He boasts of being engaged fourteen dinners deep, and received this hospitality as a tribute; while his contemporaries saw the festivity in a very different light. "Any man who has a name, or who has the power of pleasing," said Johnson, "will be very generally

invited in London. The *man Sterne*, I am told, has had engagements for three months." Johnson's feelings of morality, and respect for the priesthood, led him to speak of Sterne with contempt; but when Goldsmith added, "And a very dull fellow," he replied with his emphatic, "Why, no, sir."

The two first volumes of *Tristram* proved introductors—singular in their character certainly—to two volumes of Sermons, which the simple name of the Rev. Laurence Sterne, (ere yet he became known as the author of this wild and capricious offspring of fancy,) would never have recommended to notice, but which were sought for and read eagerly under that of Yorick. They maintained the character of the author for wit, genius, and eccentricity.

The third and fourth volumes of *Tristram* appeared in 1761, and the fifth and sixth in 1762. Both these publications were as popular as the two first volumes. The seventh and eighth, which came forth in 1765, did not attract so much attention. The novelty was in a great measure over; and although they contain some of the most beautiful passages which ever fell from the author's pen, yet neither uncle Toby nor his faithful attendant were sufficient to attract the public favour in the same degree as before. Thus the popularity of this singular work was for a time impeded by that peculiar and affected style, which had at first attracted by its novelty, but which ceased to please when it was no longer new. Four additional volumes of Sermons appeared in 1766; and in 1767 the ninth and last volume of *Tristram Shandy*.

"I shall publish," he says, "but one this year; and the next I shall begin a new work of four volumes, which when finished I shall continue *Tristram* with fresh spirit."

The new work was unquestionably his *Sentimental Journey;* for which, according to the evidence of La Fleur, Sterne had made much larger collections than were ever destined to see the light. The author's health was now become extremely feeble; and his Italian travels were designed, if possible, to relieve his consumptive complaints. The remedy proved unsuccessful; yet he lived to arrive in England, and to prepare for the press the first part of the *Sentimental Journey,* which was published in 1768.

In this place we may insert with propriety those notices of Sterne and his valet La Fleur, which appear in Mr Davis's interesting selection of anecdotes, which he has entitled an *Olio.*

"La Fleur was born in Burgundy. When a mere child he conceived a strong passion to see the world, and at eight years of age ran away from his parents. His prevenancy was always his passport, and his wants were easily supplied—milk, bread, and a straw-bed amongst the peasantry, were all he wanted for the night, and in the morning he wished to be on his way again. This rambling life he continued till he attained his tenth year, when being one day on the Pont Neuf at Paris, surveying with wonder the objects that surrounded him, he was accosted by a drummer, who easily enlisted him in the service. For six years La Fleur beat his drum in the French army; two years more would have entitled him to his discharge, but he preferred anticipation, and, exchanging dress with a peasant, easily made his escape. By having recourse to his old expedients, he made his way to Montreuil, where he introduced himself to Varenne, who fortunately took a fancy to him. The little accommodations he need-

ed were given him with cheerfulness; and as what we sow we wish to see flourish, this worthy landlord promised to get him a master; and as he deemed the best not better than La Fleur merited, he promised to recommend him to *un Milord Anglois*. He fortunately could perform as well as promise, and he introduced him to Sterne, ragged as a colt, but full of health and hilarity. The little picture which Sterne has drawn of La Fleur's Amours is so far true—He was fond of a very pretty girl at Montreuil, the elder of two sisters, who, if living, he said, resembled the Maria of Moulines: her he afterwards married, and, whatever proof it might be of his affection, was none of his prudence, for it made him not a jot richer or happier than he was before. She was a mantua-maker, and her closest application could produce no more than *six sous* a-day; finding that her assistance could go little towards their support, and after having had a daughter by her, they separated and he went to service. At length, with what money he had got together by his servitude, he returned to his wife, and they took a public-house in Royal-street, Calais.—There ill luck attended him,—war broke out; and the loss of the English sailors, who navigated the packets, and who were his principal customers, so reduced his little business, that he was obliged again to quit his wife, and confide to her guidance the little trade which was insufficient to support them both. He returned in March, 1783, but his wife had fled. A strolling company of comedians passing through the town, had seduced her from her home, and no tale or tidings of her have ever since reached him. From the period he lost his wife, says our informant, he has frequently visited England, to whose natives he is extremely partial, sometimes as a sergeant, at others as an express. Where zeal and diligence were required, La Fleur was never yet wanting."

In addition to La Fleur's account of himself, (continues Mr Davis,) the writer of the preceding obtained from him several little circumstances relative to his master, as well as the characters depicted by him, a few of which, as they would lose by abridgement, I shall give *verbatim*.

"There were moments," said La Fleur, "in which my master appeared sunk into the deepest dejection—when his

calls upon me for my services were so seldom, that I sometimes apprehensively pressed in upon his privacy, to suggest what I thought might divert his melancholy. He used to smile at my well-meant zeal, and I could see he was happy to be relieved. At others, he seemed to have received a new soul—he launched into the levity natural *à mon pays*," said La Fleur, "and cried gaily enough, '*Vive la bagatelle!*' It was in one of these moments that he became acquainted with the Grisette of the glove shop—she afterwards visited him at his lodgings, upon which La Fleur made not a single remark; but on naming the *fille de chambre*, his other visitant, he exclaimed, 'It was certainly a pity—she was so pretty and *petite*.'"

The lady mentioned under the initial L., was the Marquise Lamberti; to the interest of this lady he was indebted for the passport, the want of which began to make him seriously uneasy. Count de B. (Breteuil), notwithstanding the Shakspeare, La Fleur thinks, would have troubled himself little about him. Choiseul was minister at the time.

"*Poor Maria*

Was, alas! no fiction.—When we came up to her," said La Fleur, "she was grovelling in the road like an infant, and throwing the dust upon her head—and yet few were more lovely. Upon Sterne's accosting her with tenderness, and raising her in his arms, she collected herself, and resumed some composure—told him her tale of misery, and wept upon his breast—my master sobbed aloud. I saw her gently disengage herself from his arms, and she sung him the service to the Virgin; my poor master covered his face with his hands, and walked by her side to the cottage where she lived; there he talked earnestly to the old woman."

"Every day," said La Fleur, "while we stayed there, I carried them meat and drink from the hotel, and when we departed from Moulines, my master left his blessings and some money with the mother."—"How much," added he, "I know not—he always gave more than he could afford."

Sterne was frequently at a loss upon his travels

for ready money. Remittances were become interrupted by war, and he had wrongly estimated his expenses; he had reckoned along the post-roads, without adverting to the wretchedness that was to call upon him in his way.

"At many of our stages my master has turned to me with tears in his eyes—'These poor people oppress me, La Fleur; how shall I relieve me?' He wrote much, and to a late hour." I told La Fleur of the inconsiderable quantity he had published; he expressed extreme surprise. "I know," said he, "upon our return from this tour, there was a large trunk completely filled with papers."—"Do you know any thing of their tendency, La Fleur?"—"Yes; they were miscellaneous remarks upon the manners of the different nations he visited; and in Italy he was deeply engaged in making the most elaborate enquiries into the differing governments of the towns, and the characteristic peculiarities of the Italians of the various states."

To effect this, he read much—for the collections of the Patrons of Literature were open to him; he observed more. Singular as it may seem, Sterne endeavoured in vain to speak Italian. His valet acquired it on their journey; but his master, though he applied now and then, gave it up at length as unattainable.—"I the more wondered at this," said La Fleur, "as he must have understood Latin."

The assertion, sanctioned by Johnson, that Sterne was licentious and dissolute in conversation, stands thus far contradicted by the testimony of La Fleur: "His conversation with women," he said, "was of the most interesting kind; he usually left them serious, if he did not find them so."

The Dead Ass

Was no invention. The mourner was as simple

and affecting as Sterne has related. La Fleur recollected the circumstance perfectly.

To Monks

Sterne never exhibited any particular sympathy. La Fleur remembered several pressing in upon him, to all of whom his answer was the same— *Mon père, je suis occupé. Je suis pauvre comme vous.*

In March, 1768, Laurence Sterne, his frame exhausted by long debilitating illness, expired at his lodgings in Bond Street, London. There was something in the manner of his death singularly resembling the particulars detailed by Mrs Quickly, as attending that of Falstaff, the compeer of Yorick for infinite jest, however unlike in other particulars. While life was ebbing fast, and the patient lay on his bed totally exhausted, he complained that his feet were cold, and requested the female attendant to chafe them. She did so, and it seemed to relieve him. He complained that the cold came up higher; and whilst the assistant was in the act of rubbing his ankles and legs, he expired without a groan. It was also remarkable that his death took place much in the manner which he himself had wished; and that the last offices were rendered him, not in his own house, or by the hand of kindred affection, but in an inn, and by strangers.

We are well acquainted with Sterne's features and personal appearance, to which he himself fre-

quently alludes. He was tall and thin, with a hectic and consumptive appearance. His features, though capable of expressing with peculiar effect the sentimental emotions by which he was often affected, had also a shrewd, humorous, and sarcastic character, proper to the wit, and the satirist, and not unlike that which predominates in the portraits of Voltaire. His conversation was animated, and witty; but Johnson complained that it was marked by license, better suiting the company of the Lord of Crazy Castle, than of the great moralist. It has been said, and probably with truth, that his temper was variable and unequal, the natural consequence of an irritable bodily frame, and continued bad health. But we will not readily believe that the parent of uncle Toby could be a harsh, or habitually a bad-humoured man. Sterne's letters to his friends, and especially to his daughter, breathe all the fondness of affection; and his resources, such as they were, seem to have been always at the command of those whom he loved.[1]

If we consider Sterne's reputation as chiefly

[1] [" Of the lamentable contrast between sentiments and conduct, which this transfer of the seat of sensibility from the heart to the fancy produces, the annals of literary men afford unluckily too many examples. Alfieri, though he could write a sonnet full of tenderness to his mother, never saw her (says Mr W. Rose) but once, after their early separation, though he frequently passed within a few miles of her residence. The poet Young, with all his parade of domestic sorrows, was, it appears, a neglectful husband and harsh father; and Sterne, (to use the words employed by Lord Byron,) preferred 'whining over a dead ass to relieving a living mother.'"—MOORE's *Life of Byron*, vol. iii., p. 127 *n.*]

founded on *Tristram Shandy*, he must be regarded as liable to two severe charges ;—those, namely, of indecency, and of affectation. Upon the first accusation Sterne was himself peculiarly sore, and used to justify the licentiousness of his humour by representing it as a mere breach of decorum, which had no perilous consequence to morals. The following anecdote we have from a sure source :—Soon after *Tristram* had appeared, Sterne asked a Yorkshire lady of fortune and condition whether she had read his book. " I have not, Mr Sterne," was the answer ; " and, to be plain with you, I am informed it is not proper for female perusal."—" My dear good lady," replied the author, " do not be gulled by such stories ; the book is like your young heir there," (pointing to a child of three years old, who was rolling on the carpet in his white tunics,) " he shows at times a good deal that is usually concealed, but it is all in perfect innocence !" This witty excuse may be so far admitted ; for it cannot be said that the licentious humour of *Tristram Shandy* is of the kind which applies itself to the passions, or is calculated to corrupt society. But it is a sin against taste, if allowed to be harmless as to morals. A handful of mud is neither a firebrand nor a stone ; but to fling it about in sport, argues coarseness of mind, and want of common manners.

Sterne, however, began and ended by braving the censure of the world in this particular. A remarkable passage in one of his letters shows how lightly he was sometimes disposed to treat the charge ; and what is singular enough, his plan for turning it into ridicule seems to have been serious.

"Crebillon (*le fils*) has made a convention with me, which if he is not too lazy, will be no bad *persiflage*. As soon as I get to Toulouse, he has agreed to write me an expostulatory letter on the indecencies of T. Shandy—which is to be answered by recrimination upon the liberties in his own works. These are to be printed together—Crebillon against Sterne—Sterne against Crebillon—the copy to be sold, and the money equally divided: this is good Swiss policy."

In like manner, the greatest admirers of Sterne must own, that his style is affected, eminently, and in a degree which even his wit and pathos are inadequate to support. The style of Rabelais, which he assumed for his model, is to the highest excess rambling, excursive, and intermingled with the greatest absurdities. But Rabelais was in some measure compelled to adopt this Harlequin's habit, in order that, like licensed jesters, he might, under the cover of his folly, have permission to vent his satire against church and state. Sterne assumed the manner of his master, only as a mode of attracting attention, and of making the public stare; and, therefore, his extravagancies, like those of a feigned madman, are cold and forced, even in the midst of his most irregular flights. A man may, in the present day, be, with perfect impunity, as wise or as witty, nay, as satirical, as he can, without assuming the cap and bells of the ancient jester as an apology; and that Sterne chose voluntarily to appear under such a disguise, must be set down as mere affectation, and ranked with his unmeaning tricks of black or marbled pages, employed merely *ad captandum vulgus*. All popularity thus founded, carries in it the seeds of decay; for eccentricity in composition, like fantastic modes of dress, however

attractive when first introduced, is sure to be caricatured by stupid imitators, to become soon unfashionable, and of course to be neglected.

If we proceed to look more closely into the manner of composition which Sterne thought proper to adopt, we find a sure guide in the ingenious Dr Ferriar of Manchester, who, with most singular patience, has traced our author through the hidden sources whence he borrowed most of his learning, and many of his more striking and peculiar expressions. Rabelais, (much less read than spoken of,) the lively but licentious miscellany called *Moyen de Parvenir*, and D'Aubigne's *Baron de Fæneste*, with many other forgotten authors of the sixteenth century, were successively laid under contribution Burton's since celebrated work on Melancholy (which Dr Ferriar's Essay instantly raised to double price in the book-market) afforded Sterne an endless mass of quotations, with which he unscrupulously garnished his pages, as if they had been collected in the course of his own extensive reading.[1] The style of the same author, together with

[1] [" *Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, 4to, 1st edition*, 1624.—*8th edition, folio*, 1676—*9th edition*, 2 *vols.* 8*vo*, 1800, *reprinted from the best folio edition*, 1651-2.

" Robert Burton was the younger brother of William Burton, author of the description of Leicestershire; according to Wood, ' he was an exact mathematician, a curious calculator of nativities, a general read scholar, a thorough-paced philologist, and one that well understood the surveying of lands. As he was by many accounted a severe student, a devourer of authors, a melancholy and humorous person, so by others who knew him well, a person of great honesty, plain dealing, and charity. I have often heard some of the ancients of Christ's Church say, that his company was very merry, facete,

that of Bishop Hall, furnished the author of *Tristram* with many of those whimsical expressions, similes, and illustrations, which were long believed the genuine effusions of his own eccentric wit. For proofs of this sweeping charge we must refer the reader to Dr Ferriar's well-known Essay, and *Illustrations*, as he delicately terms them, *of Sterne's Writings;* in which it is clearly shown, that he, whose manner and style were so long thought original, was, in fact, the most unhesitating plagiarist who ever cribbed from his predecessors in order to garnish his own pages. It must be owned, at the same time, that Sterne selects the materials of his mosaic work with so much art, places them so well, and polishes them so highly, that in most cases we are disposed to pardon the want of originality, in consideration of the exquisite talent with which the borrowed materials are wrought up into the new form.

and juvenile; and no man in his time did surpass him for his ready and dexterous interlarding his common discourses among them with verses from the poets, or sentences from classic authors, which being then all the fashion in the university, made his company the more acceptable.' Burton composed *The Anatomy* with a view of relieving his own melancholy; but increased it to such a degree, that nothing could make him laugh but going to the Bridgefoot, and hearing the ribaldry of the bargemen, which rarely failed to throw him into a violent fit of laughter. His epitaph at Christ Church, in Oxford, intimates that excessive application to this celebrated work, the author's only production, was the occasion of his death. *Paucis notus, paucioribus ignotus, hic jacet Democritus Junior, cui vitam dedit et mortem melancholia.*

"Dr Johnson was so well pleased with Burton's *Anatomy*, that he declared it was the only book that ever enticed him out of bed two hours earlier than he wished to rise."—Davis's *Olio*, p. 105.]

One of Sterne's most singular thefts, considering the tenor of the passage stolen, is his declamation against literary depredators of his own class :—

"Shall we," says Sterne, "for ever make new books, as apothecaries make new medicines, by pouring only out of one vessel into another? Are we for ever to be twisting and untwining the same rope—for ever in the same track? for ever at the same pace?"

The words of Burton are ;—

"As apothecaries, we make new mixtures, every day pour out of one vessel into another; and as the Romans robbed all the cities in the world to set out their bad-sited Rome, we skim the cream of other men's wits, pick the choice flowers of their tilled gardens, to set out our own sterile plots. We weave the same web, still twist the same rope again and again."

We cannot help wondering at the coolness with which Sterne could transfer to his own work so eloquent a tirade against the very arts which he was practising.

Much has been said about the right of an author to avail himself of his predecessors' labours; and certainly, in a general sense, he that revives the wit and learning of a former age, and puts it into the form likely to captivate his own, confers a benefit on his contemporaries. But to plume himself with the very language and phrases of former writers, and to pass their wit and learning for his own, was the more unworthy in Sterne, as he had enough of original talent, had he chosen to exert it, to have dispensed with all such acts of literary petty larceny.

Tristram Shandy is no narrative, but a collection of scenes, dialogues, and portraits, humorous or

affecting, intermixed with much wit, and with much learning, original or borrowed. It resembles the irregularities of a Gothic room, built by some fanciful collector, to contain the miscellaneous remnants of antiquity which his pains have accumulated, and bearing as little proportion in its parts, as there is connexion between the pieces of rusty armour with which it is decorated. Viewing it in this light, the principal figure is Mr Shandy the elder, whose character is formed in many respects upon that of Martinus Scriblerus. The history of Martin was designed by the celebrated club of wits, by whom it was commenced, as a satire upon the ordinary pursuits of learning and science. Sterne, on the contrary, had no particular object of ridicule; his business was only to create a person, to whom he could attach the great quantity of extraordinary reading, and antiquated learning, which he had collected. He, therefore, supposed in Mr Shandy a man of an active and metaphysical, but at the same time a whimsical cast of mind, whom too much and too miscellaneous learning had brought within a step or two of madness, and who acted in the ordinary affairs of life upon the absurd theories adopted by the pedants of past ages. He is most admirably contrasted with his wife, well described as a good lady of the true poco-curante school, who neither obstructed the progress of her husband's *hobbyhorse*, to use a phrase which Sterne has rendered classical, nor could be prevailed upon to spare him the least admiration for the grace and dexterity with which he managed it.

Yorick the lively, witty, sensitive, and heedless

Parson, is the well-known personification of Sterne himself, and undoubtedly, like every portrait of himself drawn by a master of the art, bore a strong resemblance to the original. Still, however, there are shades of simplicity thrown into the character of Yorick, which did not exist in that of Sterne. We cannot believe, that the jests of the latter were so void of malice prepense, or that his satire flowed entirely out of honesty of mind and mere jocundity of humour. It must be owned, moreover, that Sterne was more like to have stolen a passage out of Stevinus, if he could have found one to his purpose, than to have left one of his manuscripts in the volume, with the careless indifference of Yorick. Still, however, we gladly recognise the general likeness between the author and the child of his fancy, and willingly pardon the pencil, which, in the delicate task of self-delineation, has softened some traits of his own features and improved others.

Uncle Toby and his faithful squire, the most delightful characters in the work, or perhaps in any other, are drawn with such a pleasing force and discrimination, that they more than entitle the author to a free pardon for his literary peculations, his indecorum, and his affectation; nay authorize him to leave the court of criticism not forgiven only, but applauded and rewarded as one who has exalted and honoured humanity, and impressed upon his readers such a lively picture of kindness and benevolence, blended with courage, gallantry, and simplicity, that their hearts must be warmed whenever it is recalled to memory. Sterne, in-

deed, might boldly plead in his own behalf, that the passages which he borrowed from others were of little value, in comparison to those which are exclusively original; and that the former might have been written by many persons, while in his own proper line he stands alone and inimitable. Something of extravagance may, perhaps, attach to Uncle Toby's favourite amusements. Yet in England, where men think and act with little regard to ridicule or censure of their neighbours, there is no impossibility, perhaps no great improbability in supposing, that a humorist might employ such a mechanical aid as my Uncle's bowling-green, in order to encourage and assist his imagination, in the pleasing but delusive task of castle-building. Men have been called children of larger growth, and among the antic toys and devices with which they are amused, the device of my Uncle, with whose pleasures we are so much disposed to sympathize, does not seem so unnatural upon reflection as it may appear at first sight.

It is well known (through Dr Ferriar's labours) that Dr Slop, with all his obstetrical engines, may be identified with Dr Burton of York, who published a Treatise of Midwifery in 1751. This person, as we have elsewhere noticed, was on bad terms with Sterne's uncle; and though there had come strife and unkindness between the uncle and the nephew, yet the latter seems to have retained aversion against the enemy of the former. But Sterne, being no politician, had forgiven the Jacobite, and only persecutes the Doctor with his raillery, as a quack and a Catholic.

It is needless to dwell longer on a work so generally known. The style employed by Sterne is fancifully ornamented, but at the same time vigorous and masculine, and full of that animation and force which can only be derived by an intimate acquaintance with the early English prose-writers. In the power of approaching and touching the finer feelings of the heart, he has never been excelled, if indeed he has ever been equalled; and may be at once recorded as one of the most affected, and one of the most simple writers,—as one of the greatest plagiarists, and one of the most original geniuses, whom England has produced. Dr Ferriar, who seemed born to trace and detect the various mazes through which Sterne carried on his depredations upon ancient and dusty authors, apologizes for the rigour of his inquest, by doing justice to those merits which were peculiarly our author's own. We cannot better close this article than with the sonnet in which his ingenious inquisitor makes the amende honorable to the shade of Yorick.

" Sterne, for whose sake I plod through miry ways,
Of antique wit and quibbling mazes drear,
Let not thy shade malignant censure fear,
Though aught of borrowed mirth my search betrays.
Long slept that mirth in dust of ancient days,
(Erewhile to Guise or wanton Valois dear;)
Till waked by thee in Skelton's joyous pile,
She flung on Tristram her capricious rays;
But the quick tear that checks our wondering smile,
In sudden pause or unexpected story,
Owns thy true mastery—and Le Fevre's woes,
Maria's wanderings, and the Prisoner's throes,
Fix thee conspicuous on the throne of glory."

HORACE WALPOLE.

The *Castle of Otranto* is remarkable, not only for the wild interest of the story, but as the first modern attempt to found a tale of amusing fiction upon the basis of the ancient romances of chivalry. The neglect and discredit of these venerable legends had commenced so early as the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when, as we learn from the criticism of the times, Spenser's fairy web was approved rather on account of the mystic and allegorical interpretation, than the plain and obvious meaning of his chivalrous pageant. The drama, which shortly afterwards rose into splendour, and English versions from the innumerable novelists of Italy, supplied to the higher class the amusement which their fathers received from the legends of Don Belianis and the Mirror of Knighthood; and the huge volumes, which were once the pastime of nobles and princes, shorn of their ornaments, and shrunk into abridgements, were banished to the kitchen or nursery, or, at best, to the hall-window of the old-fashioned country manor-house. Under Charles II., the prevailing taste for French literature dictated the introduction of those dullest of dull folios, the romances of Calprenede and Scuderi, works which hover between the ancient tale of chivalry and the modern novel. The alliance was

so ill conceived, that these ponderous tomes retained all the insufferable length and breadth of the prose volumes of chivalry, the same detailed account of reiterated and unvaried combats, the same unnatural and extravagant turn of incident, without the rich and sublime strokes of genius, and vigour of imagination, which often distinguished the early romance; while they exhibited all the unnatural metaphysical jargon, sentimental languor, and flat love-intrigue of the novel, without being enlivened by its variety of character, just traits of feeling, or acute views of life. Such an ill-imagined species of composition retained its ground longer than might have been expected, only because these romances were called works of entertainment, and that there was nothing better to supply their room. Even in the days of the *Spectator*, Clelia, Cleopatra, and the Grand Cyrus, (as that precious folio is christened by its butcherly translator,) were the favourite closet companions of the fair sex. But this unnatural taste began to give way early in the eighteenth century; and, about the middle of it, was entirely superseded by the works of Le Sage, Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett; so that even the very name of romance, now so venerable in the ear of antiquaries and book-collectors, was almost forgotten at the time *The Castle of Otranto* made its first appearance.

The peculiar situation of Horace Walpole, the ingenious author of this work, was such as gave him a decided predilection for what may be called the Gothic style, a term which he contributed not a little to rescue from the bad fame into which it

had fallen,) being currently used before his time to express whatever was in pointed and diametrical opposition to the rules of true taste.

Horace Walpole, it is needless to remind the reader, was the son of Sir Robert Walpole, that celebrated minister, who held the reins of government under two successive monarchs, with a grasp so firm and uncontrolled, that his power seemed entwined with the rights of the Brunswick family. Horace was born in the year 1716-17; was educated at Eton, and formed, at that celebrated seminary, a school-boy acquaintance with the celebrated Gray, which continued during the earlier part of their residence together at Cambridge, so that they became fellow-travellers by joint consent in 1739. They disagreed and parted on the continent; the youthful vivacity, and, perhaps, the aristocratic assumption of Walpole, not agreeing with the somewhat formal opinions and habits of the professed man of letters.[1] In the reconciliation after-

[1] [" At Reggio arose an unfortunate dispute, which ended in their sudden separation; and of this dispute and separation Mr Walpole was afterwards content to bear the blame. He represents, as the cause of the quarrel, that Gray was 'too serious a companion' for him. 'Gray,' he says, 'was for antiquities, &c., while I was for perpetual balls and plays; the fault was mine.' The difference of temper here mentioned has been already hinted at, and had probably, for a considerable time, been preparing the mind of both parties for the crisis of a rupture. Walpole was vain, and had early been accustomed to flattery; Gray was no courtier, and might, on his part, have betrayed something of discontent at being so long dependent, in his own movements, on those of another. But for information on the immediate cause of this quarrel, we are indebted to Mr Mitford, who states, on what would claim to be considered good authority, that Mr Walpole, suspecting Gray of

wards effected between them, Walpole frankly took on himself the blame of the rupture, and they continued friends until Gray's death.

When Walpole returned to England, he obtained a seat in Parliament, and entered public life as the son of a prime minister as powerful as England had known for more than a century. When the father occupied such a situation, his sons had necessarily their full share of that court which is usually paid to the near connexions of those who have the patronage of the state at their disposal. To the feeling of importance inseparable from the object of such attention, was added the early habit of connecting and associating the interest of Sir Robert Walpole, and even the domestic affairs of his family, with the parties in the Royal Family of England, and with the changes in the public affairs of Europe. It is not therefore wonderful, that the turn of Horace Walpole's mind, which was naturally tinged with the love of pedigree, and a value for family honours, should have been strengthened in that bias by circumstances, which seemed, as it were, to implicate the fate of his own house with that of princes, and to give the shields of the Walpoles, Shorters, and Robsarts, from whom he descended, an added dignity, unknown to their

having spoken ill of him to his friends in England, clandestinely opened a letter of his and re-sealed it,—an injury which Mr Gray very properly resented. If any thing could add to the meanness of such an action, it was the cowardly manner in which it is slurred over in Mr Walpole's general acknowledgment of blame, and that too, as though he thought the world, judging by its own maxims, would readily acquit him."—*Life and Works of Gray*, vol. i., p. 28.]

original owners. If Mr Walpole ever founded hopes of raising himself to political eminence, and turning his family importance to advantage in his career, the termination of his father's power, and the personal change with which he felt it attended, disgusted him with active life, and early consigned him to literary retirement. He had, indeed, a seat in Parliament for many years; but, unless upon one occasion, when he vindicated the memory of his father with great dignity and eloquence, he took no share in the debates of the House, and not much interest in the parties which maintained them. Indeed, in the account which he has himself rendered us of his own views and dispositions with respect to state affairs, he seems rather to have been bent on influencing party spirit, and bustling in public affairs, for the sake of embroilment and intrigue, than in order to carry any particular measure, whether important to himself, or of consequence to the state. In the year 1758, and at the active age of forty-one, secured from the caprices of fortune, he retired altogether from public life, to enjoy his own pursuits and studies in retirement. His father's care had invested him with three good sinecure offices, so that his income, managed with economy, which no one understood better how to practise, was sufficient for his expense in matters of virtu, as well as for maintaining his high rank in society.

The subjects of Horace Walpole's studies were, in a great measure, dictated by his habits of thinking and feeling operating upon an animated imagination, and a mind, acute, active, penetrating

and fraught with a great variety of miscellaneous knowledge. Travelling had formed his taste for the fine arts; but his early predilection in favour of birth and rank connected even those branches of study with that of Gothic history and antiquities. His *Anecdotes of Painting and Engraving* evince many marks of his favourite pursuits; but his *Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors*, and his *Historical Doubts*, we owe entirely to his pursuits as an antiquary and genealogist. The former work evinces, in a particular degree, Mr Walpole's respect for birth and rank; yet is, perhaps, ill calculated to gain much sympathy for either. It would be difficult, by any process or principle of subdivision, to select a list of as many plebeian authors, containing so very few whose genius was worthy of commemoration; but it was always Walpole's foible to disclaim a professed pursuit ot public favour, for which, however, he earnestly thirsted, and to hold himself forth as a privileged author, "one of the right-hand file," who did not mean to descend into the common arena, where professional authors contend before the public eye, but wrote merely to gratify his own taste, by throwing away a few idle hours on literary composition. There was much affectation in this, which accordingly met the reward which affectation usually incurs; as Walpole seems to have suffered a good deal from the criticism which he affected to despise, and occasionally from the neglect which he appeared to court.

The *Historical Doubts* are an acute and curious example how minute antiquarian research may

shake our faith in the facts most pointedly averred by general history. It is remarkable also to observe, how, in defending a system which was probably at first adopted as a mere literary exercise, Mr Walpole's doubts acquired, in his own eyes, the respectability of certainties, in which he could not brook controversy.

Mr Walpole's domestic occupations, as well as his studies, bore evidence of a taste for English antiquities, which was then uncommon. He loved, as a satirist has expressed it, "to gaze on Gothic toys through Gothic glass;" and the villa at Strawberry-Hill, which he chose for his abode, gradually swelled into a feudal castle, by the addition of turrets, towers, galleries, and corridors, whose fretted roofs, carved panels, and illuminated windows, were garnished with the appropriate furniture of scutcheons, armorial bearings, shields, tilting lances, and all the panoply of chivalry. The Gothic order of architecture is now so generally, and, indeed, indiscriminately used, that we are rather surprised if the country-house of a tradesman retired from business does not exhibit lanceolated windows, divided by stone shafts, and garnished by painted glass, a cupboard in the form of a cathedral-stall, and a pig-house with a front borrowed from the façade of an ancient chapel. But, in the middle of the eighteenth century, when Mr Walpole began to exhibit specimens of the Gothic style, and to show how patterns, collected from cathedrals and monuments, might be applied to chimney-pieces, ceilings, windows, and balustrades, he did not comply with the dictates of a prevailing fashion,

but pleased his own taste, and realized his own visions, in the romantic cast of the mansion which he erected.

Mr Walpole's lighter studies were conducted upon the same principle which influenced his historical researches, and his taste in architecture. His extensive acquaintance with foreign literature, in which he justly prided himself, was subordinate to his pursuits as an English antiquary and genealogist, in which he gleaned subjects for poetry and for romantic fiction, as well as for historical controversy. These are studies, indeed, proverbially dull; but it is only when they are pursued by those whose fancies nothing can enliven. A Horace Walpole, or a Thomas Warton, is not a mere collector of dry and minute facts, which the general historian passes over with disdain. He brings with him the torch of genius, to illuminate the ruins through which he loves to wander; nor does the classic scholar derive more inspiration from the pages of Virgil, than such an antiquary from the glowing, rich, and powerful feudal painting of Froissart. His mind being thus stored with information, accumulated by researches into the antiquities of the middle ages, and inspired, as he himself informs us, by the romantic cast of his own habitation, Mr Walpole resolved to give the public a specimen of the Gothic style adapted to modern literature, as he had already exhibited its application to modern architecture.

As, in his model of a Gothic modern mansion, our author had studiously endeavoured to fit to the purposes of modern convenience, or luxury, the

rich, varied, and complicated tracery and carving of the ancient cathedral, so, in *The Castle of Otranto*, it was his object to unite the marvellous turn of incident, and imposing tone of chivalry, exhibited in the ancient romance, with that accurate display of human character, and contrast of feelings and passions, which is, or ought to be, delineated in the modern novel. But Mr Walpole, being uncertain of the reception which a work upon so new a plan might experience from the world and not caring, perhaps, to encounter the ridicule which would have attended its failure, *The Castle of Otranto* was, in 1764, ushered into the world, as a translation, by William Marshall, from the Italian of Onuphrio Muralto, a sort of anagram, or translation, of the author's own name. It did not, however, long impose upon the critics of the day. It was soon suspected to proceed from a more elegant pen than that of any William Marshall, and, in the second edition, Walpole disclosed the secret. In a private letter, he gave the following account of the origin of the composition, in which he contradicts the ordinary assertion, that it was completed in eight days.

"*9th March*, 1763.

"Shall I confess to you what was the origin of this romance? I waked one morning in the beginning of last June from a dream, of which all I could recover was, that I had thought myself in an ancient castle, (a very natural dream for a head filled like mine with Gothic story,) and that on the uppermost bannister of a great staircase, I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat down and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. The work grew on my hands, and I grew fond of it. Add, that I was very glad to think of any thing rather than politics.

In short, I was so engrossed with my tale, which I completed in less than two months, that one evening I wrote from the time I had drank my tea, about six o'clock, till half an hour after one in the morning, when my hands and fingers were so weary, that I could not hold the pen to finish the sentence, but left Matilda and Isabella talking in the middle of a paragraph."

It does not seem that the authenticity of the narrative was at first suspected. Mr Gray writes to Mr Walpole, on 30th December, 1764:—

"I have received *The Castle of Otranto*, and return you my thanks for it. It engages our attention here, (*i. e.* at Cambridge,) makes some of us cry a little; and all, in general, afraid to go to bed o'nights. We take it for a translation; and should believe it to be a true story, if it were not for St Nicholas."

The friends of the author, as appears from the letter already quoted, were probably soon permitted to peep beneath the veil he had thought proper to assume; and, in the second edition, it was altogether withdrawn by a preface, in which the tendency and nature of the work are shortly commented upon and explained. From the following passage, translated from a letter by the author to Madame Deffand, it would seem that he repented of having laid aside his incognito; and sensitive to criticism, like most dilletante authors, was rather more hurt by the raillery of those who liked not his tale of chivalry, than gratified by the applause of his admirers.

"So they have translated my *Castle of Otranto*, probably in ridicule of the author. So be it;—however, I beg you will let their raillery pass in silence. Let the critics have their own way; they give me no uneasiness. I have not written the book for the present age, which will endure nothing but *cold common sense*. I confess to you, my dear friend, (and you

will think me madder than ever,) that this is the only one of my works with which I am myself pleased; I have given reins to my imagination till I became on fire with the visions and feelings which it excited. I have composed it in defiance of rules, of critics, and of philosophers; and it seems to me just so much the better for that very reason. I am even persuaded, that some time hereafter, when taste shall resume the place which philosophy now occupies, my poor *Castle* will find admirers; we have actually a few among us already, for I am just publishing the third edition. I do not say this in order to mendicate your approbation.[1] I told you from the beginning you would not like the book,—your visions are all in a different style. I am not sorry that the translator has given the Second Preface; the first, however, accords best with the style of the fiction. I wished it to be believed ancient, and almost every body was imposed upon."

If the public applause, however, was sufficiently qualified by the voice of censure to alarm the feelings of the author, the continued demand for various editions of *The Castle of Otranto*, showed how high the work really stood in popular estimation, and probably eventually reconciled Mr Walpole to the taste of his own age. This romance has been justly considered not only as the original and model of a peculiar species of composition, attempted and successfully executed by a man of great genius, but as one of the standard works of our lighter literature.

Horace Walpole continued the mode of life which he had adopted so early as 1753, until his death, unless it may be considered as an alteration, that his sentiments of Whiggism, which, he himself as-

[1] Madame Deffand had mentioned having read *The Castle of Otranto*, twice over; but she did not add a word of approbation. She blamed the translator for giving the Second Preface, chiefly because she thought it might commit Walpole with Voltaire.

sures us, almost amounted to Republicanism, received a shock from the French Revolution, which he appears from its commencement to have thoroughly detested. The tenor of his life could be hardly said to suffer interruption by his father's earldom of Orford devolving upon him when he had reached his 74th year, by the death of his nephew. He scarce assumed the title, and died a few years after it had descended to him, 2d March, 1797, at his house in Berkeley square.

While these sheets are passing through the press, we have found in Miss Hawkins's very entertaining reminiscences of her early abode at Twickenham, the following description of the person of Horace Walpole, before 1772, giving us the most lively idea of the person and manners of a Man of Fashion about the middle of the last century:—

"His figure was not merely tall, but more properly long and slender to excess; his complexion, and particularly his hands, of a most unhealthy paleness. His eyes were remarkably bright and penetrating, very dark and lively: his voice was not strong, but his tones were extremely pleasant, and, if I may so say, highly gentlemanly. I do not remember his common gait; he always entered a room in that style of affected delicacy, which fashion had then made almost natural; *chapeau bras* between his hands, as if he wished to compress it, or under his arm; knees bent, and feet on tiptoe, as if afraid of a wet floor.—His dress in visiting was most usually, in summer, when I most saw him, a lavender suit, the waistcoat embroidered with a little silver, or of white silk worked in the tambour, partridge silk stockings, and gold buckles, ruffles and frill generally lace. I remember, when a child, thinking him very much under-dressed, if at any time, except in mourning, he wore hemmed cambric. In summer no powder, but his wig combed straight, and showing his very smooth, pale forehead, and queued behind; in winter, powder."

We cannot help thinking that this most respectable lady, by whose communications respecting eminent individuals the public has been so much obliged, has been a little too severe on the Gothic whims of the architecture at Strawberry Hill. The admirers of the fine arts should have forbearance for each other, when their fervent admiration of a favourite pursuit leads them into those extremes which are caviar to the multitude. And as the ear of the architect should not be hasty to condemn the over-learned conceits of the musician, so the eye of the musician should have some toleration for the turrets and pinnacles of the fascinated builder.

It is foreign to our plan to say much of Horace Walpole's individual character. His works bear evidence to his talents; and, even striking out the horribly impressive but disgusting drama of *The Mysterious Mother*, and the excellent romance which we are about to analyze more critically, they must leave him the reputation of a man of excellent taste, and certainly of being the best letter-writer in the English language.

In private life, his temper appears to have been precarious; and though expensive in indulging his own taste, he always seems to have done so on the most economical terms possible. He is often, in his epistolary correspondence, harsh and unkind to Madame Deffand, whose talents, her blindness, and her enthusiastic affection for him, claimed every indulgence from a warm-hearted man. He is also severe and rigid towards Bentley, whose taste and talents he had put into continual requisition for the

ornaments of his house.[1] These are unamiable traits of character, and they have been quoted often, and exaggerated much. But his memory has suffered most on account of his conduct towards Chatterton, in which we have always thought he was perfectly defensible. That unhappy son of genius endeavoured to impose upon Walpole a few stanzas of very inferior merit, as ancient; and sent him an equally gross and palpable imposture under the shape of a pretended List of Painters. Walpole's sole crime lies in not patronising at once a young man, who only appeared before him in the character of a very inartificial impostor, though he afterwards proved himself a gigantic one. The fate of Chatterton lies, not at the door of Walpole, but of the public at large, who, two years (we believe) afterwards, were possessed of the splendid proofs of his natural powers, and any one of whom was as much called upon as Walpole to prevent the most unhappy catastrophe.

Finally, it must be recorded to Walpole's praise, that, though not habitually liberal, he was strictly just, and readily parted with that portion of his income which the necessities of the state required. He may, perhaps, have mistaken his character when he assumes as its principal characteristic, "disinterestedness and contempt of money," which, he intimates, was with him less "a virtue than a passion." But by the generous and apparently most sincere offer to divide his whole income with

1 [Mr Bentley, the son of the famous Doctor, and the author of "*The Wishes.*" See particulars respecting him in the Memoirs of his nephew, Mr Cumberland.]

Marshal Conway, he showed, that if there existed in his bosom more love of money than perhaps he was himself aware of, it was subjugated to the influence of the nobler virtues and feelings.

We are now to offer a few remarks on *The Castle of Otranto*, and on the class of compositions to which it belongs, and of which it was the precursor. It is doing injustice to Mr Walpole's memory to allege, that all which he aimed at in *The Castle of Otranto*, was "the art of exciting surprise and horror;" or, in other words, the appeal to that secret and reserved feeling of love for the marvellous and supernatural, which occupies a hidden corner in almost every one's bosom. Were this all which he had attempted, the means by which he sought to attain his purpose might, with justice, be termed both clumsy and puerile. But Mr Walpole's purpose was both more difficult of attainment, and more important when attained. It was his object to draw such a picture of domestic life and manners, during the feudal times, as might actually have existed, and to paint it checkered and agitated by the action of supernatural machinery, such as the superstition of the period received as matter of devout credulity. The natural parts of the narrative are so contrived, that they associate themselves with the marvellous occurrences; and, by the force of that association, render those *speciosa miracula* striking and impressive, though our cooler reason admits their impossibility. Indeed, to produce, in a well-cultivated mind, any portion of that surprise and fear which are founded on supernatural events, the frame and tenor of the whole story must be

adjusted in perfect harmony with this main-spring of the interest. He who, in early youth, has happened to pass a solitary night in one of the few ancient mansions which the fashion of more modern times has left undespoiled of their original furniture, has probably experienced, that the gigantic and preposterous figures dimly visible in the defaced tapestry,—the remote clang of the distant doors which divide him from living society,—the deep darkness which involves the high and fretted roof of the apartment,—the dimly-seen pictures of ancient knights, renowned for their valour, and perhaps for their crimes,—the varied and indistinct sounds which disturb the silent desolation of a half-deserted mansion,—and, to crown all, the feeling that carries us back to ages of feudal power and papal superstition, join together to excite a corresponding sensation of supernatural awe, if not of terror. It is in such situations, when superstition becomes contagious, that we listen with respect, and even with dread, to the legends which are our sport in the garish light of sunshine, and amid the dissipating sights and sounds of everyday life. Now, it seems to have been Walpole's object to attain, by the minute accuracy of a fable, sketched with singular attention to the costume of the period in which the scene was laid, that same association, which might prepare his reader's mind for the reception of prodigies congenial to the creed and feelings of the actors. His feudal tyrant, his distressed damsel, his resigned yet dignified churchman,—the Castle itself, with its feudal arrangements of dungeons, trap-doors, oratories, and galleries,—

the incidents of the trial, the chivalrous procession, and the combat;—in short, the scene, the performers, and action, so far as it is natural, form the accompaniments of his spectres and his miracles, and have the same effect on the mind of the reader, that the appearance and drapery of such a chamber as we have described may produce upon that of a temporary inmate. This was a task which required no little learning, no ordinary degree of fancy, no common portion of genius, to execute. The association of which we have spoken is of a nature peculiarly delicate, and subject to be broken and disarranged. It is, for instance, almost impossible to build such a modern Gothic structure as shall impress us with the feelings we have endeavoured to describe. It may be grand, or it may be gloomy; it may excite magnificent or melancholy ideas; but it must fail in bringing forth the sensation of supernatural awe, connected with halls that have echoed to the sounds of remote generations, and have been pressed by the footsteps of those who have long since passed away. Yet Horace Walpole has attained in composition, what, as an architect, he must have felt beyond the power of his art. The remote and superstitious period in which his scene is laid,—the art with which he has furnished forth its Gothic decorations,—the sustained, and, in general, the dignified tone of feudal manners,—prepare us gradually for the favourable reception of prodigies, which, though they could not really have happened at any period, were consistent with the belief of all mankind at that in which the action is placed. It was, therefore the

author's object, not merely to excite surprise and terror, by the introduction of supernatural agency, but to wind up the feelings of his reader till they became for a moment identified with those of a ruder age, which

"Held each strange tale devoutly true."

The difficulty of attaining this nice accuracy of delineation may be best estimated by comparing *The Castle of Otranto* with the less successful efforts of later writers; where, amid all their attempts to assume the tone of antique chivalry, something occurs in every chapter so decidedly incongruous, as at once reminds us of an ill-sustained masquerade, in which ghosts, knights-errant, magicians, and damsels gent, are all equipped in hired dresses from the same warehouse in Tavistock Street.

There is a remarkable particular in which Mr Walpole's steps have been departed from by the most distinguished of his followers.

Romantic narrative is of two kinds,—that which, being in itself possible, may be matter of belief at any period; and that which, though held impossible by more enlightened ages, was yet consonant with the faith of earlier times. The subject of *The Castle of Otranto* is of the latter class. Mrs Radcliffe, a name not to be mentioned without the high respect due to genius, has endeavoured to effect a compromise between those different styles of narrative, by referring her prodigies to an explanation founded on natural causes, in the latter chapters of her romances. To this improvement upon the Gothic romance, there are so many objections, that

we own ourselves inclined to prefer, as more simple and impressive, the narrative of Walpole, which details supernatural incidents as they would have been readily believed and received in the eleventh or twelfth century. In the first place, The reader feels indignant at discovering that he has been cheated into sympathy with terrors, which are finally explained as having proceeded from some very simple cause; and the interest of a second reading is entirely destroyed by his having been admitted behind the scenes at the conclusion of the first. Secondly, The precaution of relieving our spirits from the influence of supposed supernatural terror, seems as unnecessary in a work of professed fiction, as that of the prudent Bottom, who proposed that the human face of the representative of his lion should appear from under his masque, and acquaint the audience plainly that he was a man as other men, and nothing more than Snug the joiner. Lastly, These substitutes for supernatural agency are frequently to the full as improbable as the machinery which they are introduced to explain away and to supplant. The reader, who is required to admit the belief of supernatural interference, understands precisely what is demanded of him; and, if he be truly a gentle reader, throws his mind into the attitude best adapted to humour the deceit which is presented for his entertainment, and grants, for the time of perusal, the premises on which the fable depends.[1] But if the author volun-

1 There are instances to the contrary, however. For example, that stern votary of severe truth, who cast aside Gulliver's Travels as containing a parcel of improbable fictions.

tarily binds himself to account for all the wondrous occurrences which he introduces, we are entitled to exact that the explanation shall be natural, easy, ingenious, and complete. Every reader of such works must remember instances, in which the explanation of mysterious circumstances in the narrative has proved equally, nay, even more incredible, than if they had been accounted for by the agency of supernatural beings; for the most incredulous must allow, that the interference of such agency is more possible than that an effect resembling it should be produced by an utterly inadequate cause. But it is unnecessary to enlarge farther on a part of the subject, which we have only mentioned to exculpate our author from the charge of using machinery more clumsy than his tale from its nature required The bold assertion of the actual existence of phantoms and apparitions seems to us to harmonize much more naturally with the manners of ancient times, and to produce a more powerful effect upon the reader's mind, than any attempt to reconcile the superstitious credulity of feudal ages with the philosophic scepticism of our own, by referring those prodigies to the operation of fulminating powder, combined mirrors, magic lanterns, trap-doors, speaking-trumpets, and such-like apparatus of German phantasmagoria.

It cannot, however, be denied, that the character of the supernatural machinery in *The Castle of Otranto* is liable to objections. Its action and interference is rather too frequent, and presses too hard and constantly upon the same feelings in the reader's mind, to the hazard of diminishing the

elasticity of the spring upon which it should operate. The fund of fearful sympathy which can be afforded by a modern reader to a tale of wonder, is much diminished by the present habits of life, and modes of education. Our ancestors could wonder and thrill through all the mazes of an interminable metrical romance of fairy land, and of an enchantment, the work perhaps of some

> "Prevailing poet whose undoubting mind
> Believed the magic wonders which he sung."

But our own habits and feelings and belief are different, and a transient, though vivid impression, is all that can be excited by a tale of wonder, even in the most fanciful mind of the present day. By the too frequent recurrence of his prodigies, Mr Walpole ran, perhaps, his greatest risk of awakening *la raison froide*, that "cold common sense" which he justly deemed the greatest enemy of the effect which he hoped to produce. It may be added also, that the supernatural occurrences of *The Castle of Otranto* are brought forward into too strong daylight, and marked by an over degree of distinctness and accuracy of outline. A mysterious obscurity seems congenial at least, if not essential, to our ideas of disembodied spirits; and the gigantic limbs of the ghost of Alphonso, as described by the terrified domestics, are somewhat too distinct and corporeal to produce the feelings which their appearance is intended to excite. This fault, however if it be one, is more than compensated by the high merit of many of the marvellous incidents in the romance. The descent of the picture of Manfred's ancestor, although it borders on extravagance, is

finely introduced, and interrupts an interesting dialogue with striking effect. We have heard it observed, that the animated figure should rather have been a statue than a picture. We greatly doubt the justice of the criticism. The advantages of the colouring induce us decidedly to prefer Mr Walpole's fiction to the proposed substitute. There are few who have not felt, at some period of their childhood, a sort of terror from the manner in which the eye of an ancient portrait appears to fix that of the spectator from every point of view. It is, perhaps, hypercritical to remark, (what, however, Walpole of all authors might have been expected to attend to,) that the time assigned to the action, being about the eleventh century, is rather too early for the introduction of a full-length portrait. The apparition of the skeleton hermit to the Prince of Vicenza was long accounted a master-piece of the horrible; but of late the valley of Jehosaphat could hardly supply the dry bones necessary for the exhibition of similar spectres, so that injudicious and repeated imitation has, in some degree, injured the effect of its original model. What is more striking in *The Castle of Otranto*, is the manner in which the various prodigious appearances, bearing each upon the other, and all upon the accomplishment of the ancient prophecy, denouncing the ruin of the house of Manfred, gradually prepare us for the grand catastrophe. The moonlight vision of Alphonso dilated to immense magnitude, the astonished group of spectators in the front, and the shattered ruins of the castle in the background, are briefly and sublimely described. We know no passage of simi-

lar merit, unless it be the apparition of Fadzean, or Fadoun, in an ancient Scottish poem.[1]

That part of the romance which depends upon human feelings and agency, is conducted with the dramatic talent which afterwards was so conspicuous in *The Mysterious Mother.* The persons are indeed rather generic than individual; but this was in a degree necessary to a plan, calculated rather to exhibit a general view of society and manners during the times which the author's imagination loved to contemplate, than the most minute shades and discriminating points of particular characters. But the actors in the romance are strikingly drawn, with bold outlines becoming the age and nature of the story. Feudal tyranny was, perhaps, never better exemplified, than in the character of Manfred. He has the courage, the art, the duplicity, the ambition, of a barbarous chieftain of the dark ages, yet with touches of remorse and natural feeling, which preserve some sympathy for him when his pride is quelled, and his race extinguished. The pious Monk, and the patient Hippolita, are well contrasted with this selfish and tyrannical Prince. Theodore is the juvenile hero of a roman-

[1] This spectre, the ghost of a follower whom he had slain upon suspicion of treachery, appeared to no less a person than Wallace, the champion of Scotland, in the ancient castle of Gask-hall.—See Ellis's *Specimens*, vol. i.—[" In the first book of *The Jerusalem of Lope de Vega,* there is an incident like a very remarkable one in the *Castle of Otranto;* the picture of Norandine stalks from its panel, and addresses Saladine;—the resemblance may be merely accidental, but if Horace Walpole had looked at the beginning of the poem, it is the first thing which he would have found there."—*Quarterly Review,* Oct. 1817.]

tic tale, and Matilda has more interesting sweetness than usually belongs to its heroine. As the character of Isabella is studiously kept down, in order to relieve that of the daughter of Manfred, few readers are pleased with the concluding insinuation, that she became at length the bride of Theodore. This is in some degree a departure from the rules of chivalry; and, however natural an occurrence in common life, rather injures the magic illusions of romance. In other respects, making an allowance for the extraordinary incidents of a dark and tempestuous age, the story, so far as within the course of natural events, is happily detailed, its progress is uniform, its events interesting and well combined, and the conclusion grand, tragical, and affecting.

The style of *The Castle of Otranto* is pure and correct English of the earlier and more classical standard. Mr Walpole rejected, upon taste and principle, those heavy though powerful auxiliaries which Dr Johnson imported from the Latin language, and which have since proved to many a luckless wight, who has essayed to use them, as unmanageable as the gauntlets of Eryx,

> ———————et pondus et ipsa
> Huc illuc vinclorum immensa volumina versat.

Neither does the purity of Mr Walpole's language, and the simplicity of his narrative, admit that luxuriant, florid, and high-varnished landscape painting, with which Mrs Radcliffe often adorned, and not unfrequently encumbered, her kindred romances. Description, for its own sake, is scarcely once attempted in *The Castle of Otranto;* and if authors would consider how very much this restric-

tion tends to realize narrative, they might be tempted to abridge at least the showy and wordy exuberance of a style fitter for poetry than prose. It is for the dialogue that Walpole reserves his strength; and it is remarkable how, while conducting his mortal agents with all the art of a modern dramatist, he adheres to the sustained tone of chivalry, which marks the period of the action. This is not attained by patching his narrative or dialogue with glossarial terms, or antique phraseology, but by taking care to exclude all that can awaken modern associations. In the one case his romance would have resembled a modern dress, preposterously decorated with antique ornaments; in its present shape, he has retained the form of the ancient armour, but not its rust and cobwebs. In illustration of what is above stated, we refer the reader to the first interview of Manfred with the Prince of Vicenza, where the manners and language of chivalry are finely painted, as well as the perturbation of conscious guilt, confusing itself in attempted exculpation, even before a mute accuser. The characters of the inferior domestics have been considered as not bearing a proportion sufficiently dignified to the rest of the story. But this is a point on which the author has pleaded his own cause fully in the original Prefaces.

We have only to add, in conclusion to these desultory remarks, that if Horace Walpole, who led the way in this new species of literary composition, has been surpassed by some of his followers in diffuse brilliancy of description, and perhaps in the art of detaining the mind of the reader in a

state of feverish and anxious suspense, through a protracted and complicated narrative, more will yet remain with him than the single merit of originality and invention. The applause due to chastity and precision of style,—to a happy combination of supernatural agency with human interest,—to a tone of feudal manners and language, sustained by characters strongly drawn and well discriminated,—and to unity of action, producing scenes alternately of interest and of grandeur;—the applause, in fine, which cannot be denied to him who can excite the passions of fear and of pity, must be awarded to the author of *The Castle of Otranto.*[1]

[1] [The reader is referred to Mr D'Israeli's *Calamities of Authors* for a variety of piquant details respecting Lord Orford's literary and personal character; as also to the *Quarterly Review*, on his posthumous "*Memoirs of the last Ten Years of George II.;*" and a brilliant article in the *Edinburgh Review* for January, 1834, on his "*Letters to Sir Horace Mann,*" edited in 1833 by the late Lord Dover. There are also various interesting passages concerning Walpole in Byron's Letters and Diaries. Lord B. in one place lauds him as the author of the last English Tragedy, and the first English Romance.]

CLARA REEVE.

Clara Reeve, the ingenious authoress of *The Old English Baron*, was the daughter of the Reverend William Reeve, M.A., Rector of Freston, and of Kerton, in Suffolk, and perpetual Curate of Saint Nicholas. Her grandfather was the Reverend Thomas Reeve, Rector of Storeham Aspal, and afterwards of St Mary Stoke, in Ipswich, where the family had been long resident, and enjoyed the rights of free burghers. Miss Reeve's mother's maiden name was Smithies, daughter of ——— Smithies, goldsmith and jeweller to King George I.

In a letter to a friend, Mrs Reeve thus speaks of her father :—" My father was an old Whig ; from him I have learned all that I know ; he was my oracle ; he used to make me read the Parliamentary debates while he smoked his pipe after supper. I gaped and yawned over them at the time, but, unawares to myself, they fixed my principles once and for ever. He made me read Rapin's *History of England;* the information it gave, made amends for its dryness. I read *Cato's Letters*, by Trenchard and Gordon ; I read the Greek and Roman Histories, and *Plutarch's Lives ;*—all these at an age when few people of either sex can read their names."

The Reverend Mr Reeve, himself one of a

family of eight children, had the same numerous succession; and it is therefore likely, that it was rather Clara's strong natural turn for study, than any degree of exclusive care which his partiality bestowed, that enabled her to acquire such a stock of early information. After his death, his widow resided in Colchester with three of their daughters; and it was here that Miss Clara Reeve first became an authoress, by translating from Latin Barclay's fine old romance, entitled *Argenis*, published in 1762, under the title of *The Phœnix*. It was in 1777, five years afterwards, that she produced her first and most distinguished work. It was published by Mr Dilly of the Poultry (who gave ten pounds for the copyright) under the title of *The Champion of Virtue, a Gothic Story*. The work came to a second edition in the succeeding year, and was then first called *The Old English Baron*. The cause of the change we do not pretend to guess; for if Fitzowen be considered as the Old English Baron, we do not see wherefore a character, passive in himself from beginning to end, and only acted upon by others, should be selected to give a name to the story. We ought not to omit to mention, that this work is inscribed to Mrs Brigden, the daughter of Richardson, who is stated to have lent her assistance to the revisal and correction of the work.

The success of *The Old English Baron* encouraged Miss Reeve to devote more of her leisure hours to literary composition, and she published in succession the following works:—*The Two Mentors, a Modern Story; the Progress of Romance,*

through Times, Countries, and Manners; The Exile; or Memoirs of the Count de Cronstadt, the principal incidents of which are borrowed from a novel by M. D'Arnaud; *The School for Widows, a Novel; Plans of Education, with Remarks on the System of other Writers*, in a duodecimo volume; and *The Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon, a natural Son of Edward the Black Prince; with Anecdotes of many other eminent Persons of the fourteenth Century.*

To these works we have to add another tale, of which the interest turned upon supernatural appearances. Miss Reeve informs the public, in a preface to a late edition of *The Old English Baron*, that in compliance with the suggestion of a friend, she had composed *Castle Connor, an Irish Story*, in which apparitions were introduced. The manuscript, being intrusted to some careless or unfaithful person, fell aside, and was never recovered.

The various novels of Clara Reeve are all marked by excellent good sense, pure morality, and a competent command of those qualities which constitute a good romance. They were, generally speaking, favourably received at the time, but none of them took the same strong possession of the public mind as *The Old English Baron*, upon which the fame of the author may be considered as now exclusively rested.

Miss Reeve, respected and beloved, led a retired life, admitting no materials for biography, until 3d December, 1803, when she died at Ipswich, her native city, at the advanced age of seventy-eight years. She was buried in the churchyard of St

Stephens, according to her particular direction near to the grave of her friend, the Reverend Mr Derby. Her brother, the Reverend Thomas Reeve, still lives, as also her sister, Mrs Sarah Reeve, both advanced in life. Another brother, bred to the navy, attained the rank of vice-admiral in that service.

Such are the only particulars which we have been able to collect concerning this accomplished and estimable woman, and, in their simplicity, the reader may remark that of her life and of her character. As critics, it is our duty to make some farther observations, which shall be entirely confined to her most celebrated work, upon which her fame arose, and on which, without meaning disparagement to her other compositions, we conceive it entitled to rest.

The authoress has herself informed us that *The Old English Baron* is the "literary offspring of *The Castle of Otranto;*" and she has obliged us by pointing out the different and more limited view which she had adopted, of the supernatural machinery employed by Horace Walpole. She condemns the latter for the extravagance of several of his conceptions; for the gigantic size of his sword and helmet; and for the violent fictions of a walking picture, and a skeleton in a hermit's cowl. A ghost, she contends, to be admitted as an ingredient in romance, must behave himself like ghosts of sober demeanour, and subject himself to the common rules still preserved in grange and hall, as circumscribing beings of his description.

We must, however, notwithstanding her autho-

rity, enter our protest against fettering the realm of shadows by the opinions entertained of it in the world of realities. If we are to try ghosts by the ordinary rules of humanity, we bar them of their privileges entirely. For instance, why admit the existence of an aerial phantom, and deny it the terrible attribute of magnifying its stature? why admit an enchanted helmet, and not a gigantic one? why allow as an impressive incident the fall of a suit of armour, thrown down, we must suppose, by no mortal hand, and at the same time deny the same supernatural influence the power of producing the illusion (for it is only represented as such) upon Manfred, which gives seeming motion and life to the portrait of his ancestor? It may be said, and it seems to be Miss Reeve's argument, that there is a verge of probability, which even the most violent figment must not transgress; but we reply by the cross question, that if we are once to subject our preternatural agents to the limits of human reason, where are we to stop? We might, under such a rule, demand of ghosts an account of the very circuitous manner in which they are pleased to open their communications with the living world. We might, for example, move a *quo warranto* against the spectre of the murdered Lord Lovel, for lurking about the eastern apartment, when it might have been reasonably expected, that if he did not at once impeach his murderers to the next magistrate, he might at least have put Fitzowen into the secret, and thus obtained the succession of his son more easily than by the dubious and circuitous route of a single combat. If there should be an

appeal against this imputation, founded on the universal practice of ghosts, in such circumstances, who always act with singular obliquity in disclosing the guilt of which they complain, the matter becomes a question of precedent; in which view of the case, we may vindicate Horace Walpole for the gigantic exaggeration of his phantom, by the similar expansion of the terrific vision of Fadoun, in Blind Harry's *Life of Wallace;* and we could, were we so disposed, have paralleled his moving picture, by the example of one with which we ourselves had some acquaintance, which was said both to move and to utter groans, to the great alarm of a family of the highest respectability.

Where, then, may the reader ask, is the line to be drawn? or what are the limits to be placed to the reader's credulity, when those of common sense and ordinary nature are once exceeded? The question admits only one answer, namely, that the author himself, being in fact the magician, shall evoke no spirits whom he is not capable of endowing with manners and language corresponding to their supernatural character. Thus Shakspeare, drawing such characters as Caliban and Ariel, gave them reality, not by appealing to actual opinions, which his audience might entertain respecting the possibility or impossibility of their existence, but by investing them with such attributes as all readers and spectators recognised as those which must have corresponded to such extraordinary beings, had their existence been possible. If he had pleased to put into language the "squeaking and gibbering" of those disembodied phantoms which

haunted the streets of Rome, no doubt his wonderful imagination could have filled up the sketch, which, marked by these two emphatic and singularly felicitous expressions, he has left as characteristic of the language of the dead.

In this point of view, our authoress has, with equal judgment and accuracy, confined her flight within those limits on which her pinions could support her; and though we are disposed to contest her general principle, we are willing to admit it as a wise and prudent one, so far as applied to regulate her own composition. In no part of *The Old English Baron*, or of any other of her works, does Miss Reeve show the possession of a rich or powerful imagination. Her dialogue is sensible, easy and agreeable, but neither marked by high flights of fancy, nor strong bursts of passion. (Her apparition is an ordinary fiction, of which popular superstition used to furnish a thousand instances, when nights were long, and a family, assembled round a Christmas log, had little better to do than to listen to such tales.) Miss Reeve has been very felicitously cautious in showing us no more of Lord Lovel's ghost than she needs must—he is a silent apparition, palpable to the sight only, and never brought forward into such broad daylight as might have dissolved our reverence. And so far, we repeat, the authoress has used her own power to the utmost advantage, and gained her point by not attempting a step beyond it. But we cannot allow that the rule which, in her own case, has been well and wisely adopted, ought to circumscribe a bolder and a more imaginative writer.

In what may be called the costume, or keeping, of the chivalrous period in which the scene of both is laid, the language and style of Horace Walpole, together with his intimate acquaintance with the manners of the middle ages, form an incalculable difference betwixt *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Old English Baron.* Clara Reeve, probably, was better acquainted with Plutarch and Rapin, than with Froissart or Oliver de la Marche. This is no imputation on the taste of that ingenious lady. In her days, Macbeth was performed in a general's full uniform, and Lord Hastings was dressed like a modern high chamberlain going to court. Or, if she looked to romances for her authority, those of the French school were found introducing, under the reign of Cyrus or of Faramond, or in the early republic at Rome, the sentiments and manners of the court of Louis XIV. In the present day, more attention to costume is demanded, and authors, as well as players, are obliged to make attempts, however fantastic or grotesque, to imitate the manners, on the one hand, and the dress on the other, of the times in which the scene is laid. Formerly, nothing of this kind was either required or expected; and it is not improbable that the manner in which Walpole circumscribes his dialogue (in most instances) within the stiff and stern precincts prescribed by a strict attention to the manners and language of the times, is the first instance of such restrictions. In *The Old English Baron*, on the contrary, all parties speak and act much in the fashion of the seventeenth century; employ the same phrases of courtesy; and adopt the same tone of conversation.

Baron Fitzowen, and the principal characters, talk after the fashion of country squires of that period, and the lower personages like gaffers and gammers of the same era. And " were but the combat in lists left out," or converted into a modern duel, the whole train of incidents might, for any peculiarity to be traced in the dialect or narration, have taken place in the time of Charles II., or in either of the two succeeding reigns. As it is, the story reads as if it had been transcribed into the language, and remodelled according to the ideas, of this latter period. Yet we are uncertain whether, upon the whole, this does not rather add to, than diminish the interest of the work ;—at least it gives an interest of a different kind, which, if it cannot compete with that which arises out of a highly exalted and poetical imagination, and a strict attention to the character and manners of the middle ages, has yet this advantage, that it reaches its point more surely, than had a higher, more difficult, and more ambitious line of composition been attempted.

To explain our meaning :—He that would please the modern world, yet present the exact impression of a tale of the middle ages, will repeatedly find that he will be obliged, in despite of his utmost exertions, to sacrifice the last to the first object, and eternally expose himself to the just censure of the rigid antiquary, because he must, to interest the readers of the present time, invest his characters with language and sentiments unknown to the period assigned to his story ; and thus his utmost efforts only attain a sort of composition between the true and the fictitious,—just as the dress of

Lear, as performed on the stage, is neither that of a modern sovereign, nor the cerulean painting and bear-hide with which the Britons, at the time when that monarch is supposed to have lived, tattooed their persons, and sheltered themselves from cold. All this inconsistency is avoided by adopting the style of our grandfathers and great-grandfathers, sufficiently antiquated to accord with the antiquated character of the narrative, yet copious enough to express all that is necessary to its interest, and to supply that deficiency of colouring which the more ancient times do not afford.

It is no doubt true, that *The Old English Baron*, written in the latter and less ambitious taste, is sometimes tame and tedious, not to say mean and tiresome. The total absence of peculiar character (for every person introduced is rather described as one of a genus than as an original, discriminated, and individual person) may have its effect in producing the tædium which loads the story in some places. This is a general defect in the novels of the period, and it was scarce to be expected that the amiable and accomplished authoress, in her secluded situation, and with acquaintance of events and characters derived from books alone, should have rivalled those authors who gathered their knowledge of the human heart from having, like Fielding and Smollett, become acquainted, by sad experience, with each turn of "many-coloured life." Nor was it to be thought that she should have emulated in this particular her prototype Walpole, who, as a statesman, a poet, and a man of the world, "who knew the world like a man," has given much

individual character to his sketch of Manfred. What we here speak of is not the deficiency in the style and costume, but a certain creeping and low line of narrative and sentiment; which may be best illustrated by the grave and minute accounting into which Sir Philip Harclay and the Baron Fitzowen enter,—after an event so unpleasant as the judgment of Heaven upon a murderer, brought about by a judicial combat, and that combat occasioned by the awful and supernatural occurrences in the eastern chamber,—where we find the arrears of the estate gravely set off against the education of the heir, and his early maintenance in the Baron's family. Yet even these prolix, minute, and unnecessary details, are precisely such as would occur in a similar story told by a grandsire or grandame to a circle assembled round a winter's fire; and while they take from the dignity of the composition, and would therefore have been rejected by a writer of more exalted imagination, do certainly add in some degree to its reality, and bear in that respect a resemblance to the art with which De Foe impresses on his readers the truth of his fictions, by the insertion of many minute, and immaterial, or unnatural circumstances, which we are led to suppose could only be recorded because they are true. Perhaps, to be circumstantial and abundant in minute detail, and in one word, though an unauthorized one, to be somewhat *prosy*, is a secret mode of securing a certain necessary degree of credulity from the hearers of a ghost-story. It gives a sort of quaint antiquity to the whole, as belonging to the times of "superstitious elde," and

those whom we have observed to excel in oral narratives of such a nature, usually study to secure the attention of their audience by employing this art. At least, whether owing to this mode of telling her tale, or to the interest of the story itself, and its appeal to the secret reserve of superstitious feeling which maintains its influence in most bosoms, *The Old English Baron* has always produced as strong an effect as any story of the kind, although liable to the objections which we have freely stated, without meaning to impeach the talents of the ami able authoress.

Dismissing this interesting subject for the present, we trust we may find some future opportunity to offer a few more general remarks on the introduction of supernatural machinery into modern works of fiction.

MRS ANN RADCLIFFE.

The life of Mrs Ann Radcliffe, spent in the quiet shade of domestic privacy, and in the interchange of familiar affections and sympathies, appears to have been as retired and sequestered, as the fame of her writings was brilliant and universal. The most authentic account of her birth, family, and personal appearance, seems to be that contained in the following communication to a work of contemporary biography.[1]

"She was," (says this writer,) "born in London, in the year 1764, [9th July;] the daughter of William and Ann Ward, who, though in trade, were nearly the only persons of their two families not living in handsome, or at least easy independence. Her paternal grandmother was a Cheselden, the sister of the celebrated surgeon, of whose kind regard her father had a grateful recollection, and some of whose presents, in books, I have seen. The late Lieutenant-Colonel Cheselden, of Somerby in Leicestershire, was, I think, another nephew of the surgeon. Her father's aunt, the late Mrs Barwell, first of Leicester, and then of Duffield in Derbyshire, was one of the sponsors at her baptism. Her maternal grandmother was Anne Oates, the sister

[1] [Annual Biography and Obituary, vol. viii., for 1824.]

of Dr Samuel Jebb, of Stratford, who was the father of Sir Richard: on that side she was also related to Dr Halifax, Bishop of Gloucester, and to Dr Halifax, Physician to the King. Perhaps it may gratify curiosity to state farther, that she was descended from a near relative of the De Witts of Holland. In some family papers which I have seen, it is stated, that a De Witt, of the family of John and Cornelius, came to England, under the patronage of government, upon some design of draining the fens in Lincolnshire, bringing with him a daughter, Amelia, then an infant. The prosecution of the plan is supposed to have been interrupted by the rebellion, in the time of Charles the First; but De Witt appears to have passed the remainder of his life in a mansion near Hull, and to have left many children, of whom Amelia was the mother of one of Mrs Radcliffe's ancestors.

"This admirable writer, whom I remember from about the time of her twentieth year, was, in her youth, of a figure exquisitely proportioned; while she resembled her father, and his brother and sister, in being low of stature. Her complexion was beautiful, as was her whole countenance, especially her eyes, eyebrows, and mouth. Of the faculties of her mind, let her works speak. Her tastes were such as might be expected from those works. To contemplate the glories of creation, but more particularly the grander features of their display, was one of her chief delights; to listen to fine music was another. She had also a gratification in listening to any good verbal sounds; and would desire to hear passages repeated from the Latin and Greek

classics; requiring, at intervals, the most literal translations that could be given, with all that was possible of their idiom, how much soever the version might be embarrassed by that aim at exactness. Though her fancy was prompt, and she was, as will readily be supposed, qualified in many respects for conversation, she had not the confidence and presence of mind, without which, a person conscious of being observed, can scarcely be at ease, except in long-tried society. Yet she had not been without some good examples of what must have been ready conversation in more extensive circles. Besides that a great part of her youth had been passed in the residence of her superior relatives, she had the advantage of being much loved, when a child, by the late Mr Bentley; to whom, on the establishment of the fabric known by the name of Wedgwood and Bentley's, was appropriated the superintendence of all that related to form and design. Mr Wedgwood was the intelligent man of commerce, and the able chemist; Mr Bentley the man of more general literature, and of taste in the arts. One of her mother's sisters was married to Mr Bentley; and, during the life of her aunt, who was accomplished 'according to the moderation,'—may I say, the *wise* moderation?—of that day, the little niece was a favourite guest at Chelsea, and afterwards at Turnham Green, where Mr and Mrs Bentley resided. At their house she saw several persons of distinction for literature; and others who, without having been so distinguished, were beneficial objects of attention for their minds and their manners. Of the former class the late Mrs

Montague, and once, I think, Mrs Piozzi ; of t
latter, Mrs Ord. The gentleman, called Atheni
Stuart, was also a visitor there."

Thus respectably born and connected, Miss Wa
at the age of twenty-three, acquired the name whi
she has made so famous, by marrying William Ra
cliffe, Esq., graduated at Oxford, and a student
law. He renounced, however, the prosecution
his legal studies, and became afterwards propriet
and editor of the *English Chronicle*.

Thus connected in a manner which must ha
induced her to cherish her literary powers, M
Radcliffe first came before the public as a novel
in 1789, only two years after her marriage, a
when she was twenty-five years old. The Roman
entitled *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbay*
which she then produced, gave, however, but m
derate intimation of the author's eminent powe
The scene is laid in Scotland, during the dark ag
but without any attempt to trace either the pecul
manners or scenery of the country ; and althoug
in reading the work with that express purpose, v
can now trace some germs of that taste and tale
for the wild, romantic, and mysterious, which t
authoress afterwards employed with such effect, v
cannot consider it, on the whole, as by any mea
worthy of her pen. It is nevertheless curious
compare this sketch with Mrs Radcliffe's mo
esteemed productions, since it is of consequence
the history of human genius to preserve its earl
efforts, that we may trace, if possible, how the
at length germinates from the unmarked acorn.

Mrs Radcliffe's genius was more advantageousl

displayed in the *Sicilian Romance*, which appeared in 1790, and which, as we ourselves (then novel-readers of no ordinary appetite) well recollect, attracted in a considerable degree the attention of the public. This work displays the exuberance and fertility of imagination, which was the author's principal characteristic. Adventures heaped on adventures, in quick and brilliant succession, with all the hair-breadth charms of escape or capture, hurry the reader along with them, and the imagery and scenery by which the action is relieved, are like those of a splendid Oriental tale. Still this work had marked traces of the defects natural to an unpractised author. The scenes were inartificially connected, and the characters hastily sketched, without any attempt at individual distinctions; being cast in the usual mould of ardent lovers, tyrannical parents, with domestic ruffians, guards, and others, who had wept or stormed through the chapters of romance, without much alteration in their family habits or features, for a quarter of a century before Mrs Radcliffe's time. Nevertheless, the *Sicilian Romance* attracted much notice among the novel-readers of the day, as far excelling the ordinary meagreness of stale and uninteresting incident with which they were at that time regaled from the Leadenhall press. Indeed, the praise may be claimed for Mrs Radcliffe, of having been the first to introduce into her prose fictions a beautiful and fanciful tone of natural description and impressive narrative, which had hitherto been exclusively applied to poetry. Fielding, Richardson, Smollett, even Walpole, though writing upon an imaginative

subject, are decidedly prose authors. Mrs Radcliffe has a title to be considered as the first poetess of romantic fiction, that is, if actual rhythm shall not be deemed essential to poetry.

The Romance of the Forest, which appeared in 1791, placed the author at once in that rank and preeminence in her own particular style of composition, which her works have ever since maintained. Her fancy, in this new effort, was more regulated, and subjected to the fetters of a regular story. The persons, too, although perhaps there is nothing very original in the conception, were depicted with skill far superior to that which the author had hitherto displayed, and the work attracted the public attention in proportion. That of La Motte, indeed, is sketched with particular talent, and most part of the interest of the piece depends upon the vacillations of a character, who, though upon the whole we may rather term him weak and vicious, than villanous, is, nevertheless, at every moment on the point of becoming an agent in atrocities which his heart disapproves of. He is the exact picture "of the needy man who has known better days;" one who, spited at the world, from which he has been expelled with contempt, and condemned by circumstances to seek an asylum in a desolate mansion full of mysteries and horrors, avenges himself, by playing the gloomy despot within his own family, and tyrannizing over those who were subjected to him only by their strong sense of duty. A more powerful agent appears on the scene—obtains the mastery over this dark but irresolute spirit, and, by alternate exertion of seduction and terror, compels

him to be his agent in schemes against the virtue, and even the life of an orphan, whom he was bound in gratitude, as well as in honour and hospitality, to cherish and protect.

The heroine, too, wearing the usual costume of innocence, purity, and simplicity, as proper to heroines as white gowns are to the sex in general, has some pleasant touches of originality. Her grateful affection for the La Motte family—her reliance on their truth and honour, when the wife had become unkind, and the father treacherous towards her, is an interesting and individual trait in her character.

But although undoubtedly the talents of Mrs Radcliffe, in the important point of drawing and finishing the characters of her narrative, were greatly improved since her earlier attempts, and manifested sufficient power to raise her far above the common crowd of novelists, this was not the department of art on which her popularity rested. The public were chiefly aroused, or rather fascinated, by the wonderful conduct of a story, in which the author so successfully called out the feelings of mystery and of awe, while chapter after chapter, and incident after incident, maintained the thrilling attraction of awakened curiosity and suspended interest. Of these, every reader felt the force, from the sage in his study, to the family group in middle life, which assembles round the evening taper, to seek a solace from the toils of ordinary existence by an excursion into the regions of imagination. The tale was the more striking, because varied and relieved by descriptions of the ruined mansion, and the forest with which it is surrounded, under so

many different points of view, now pleasing and serene, now gloomy, now terrible—scenes which could only have been drawn by one to whom nature had given the eye of a painter, with the spirit of a poet.

In 1793, Mrs Radcliffe had the advantage of visiting the scenery of the Rhine, and, although we are not positive of the fact, we are strongly inclined to suppose, that *The Mysteries of Udolpho* were written, or at least corrected, after the date of this journey; for the mouldering castles of the robber-chivalry of Germany, situated on the wild and romantic banks of that celebrated stream, seem to have given a bolder flight to her imagination, and a more glowing character to her colouring, than are exhibited in *The Romance of the Forest.* The scenery on the Lakes of Westmoreland, which Mrs Radcliffe visited about the same time, was also highly calculated to awaken her fancy, as nature has in these wild but beautiful regions realized the descriptions in which this authoress loved to indulge. Her remarks upon these countries were given to the public in 1794, in a very well-written work, entitled, *A Journey through Holland, &c.*

Much was of course expected from Mrs Radcliffe's next effort, and the booksellers felt themselves authorized in offering what was then considered as an unprecedented sum, L.500, for *The Mysteries of Udolpho.* It often happens, that a writer's previous reputation proves the greatest enemy which, in a second attempt upon public favour, he has to encounter. Exaggerated expectations are excited and circulated, and criticism,

which had been seduced into former approbation by the pleasure of surprise, now stands awakened and alert to pounce upon every failing. Mrs Radcliffe's popularity, however, stood the test, and was heightened rather than diminished by *The Mysteries of Udolpho.* The very name was fascinating; and the public, who rushed upon it with all the eagerness of curiosity, rose from it with unsated appetite. When a family was numerous, the volumes always flew, and were sometimes torn, from hand to hand; and the complaints of those whose studies were thus interrupted, were a general tribute to the genius of the author. Another might be found of a different and higher description, in the dwelling of the lonely invalid, or unregarded votary of celibacy, who was bewitched away from a sense of solitude, of indisposition, of the neglect of the world, or of secret sorrow, by the potent charm of this mighty enchantress. Perhaps the perusal of such works may, without injustice, be compared with the use of opiates, baneful, when habitually and constantly resorted to, but of most blessed power in those moments of pain and of languor, when the whole head is sore, and the whole heart sick. If those who rail indiscriminately at this species of composition, were to consider the quantity of actual pleasure which it produces, and the much greater proportion of real sorrow and distress which it alleviates, their philanthropy ought to moderate their critical pride, or religious intolerance.

To return to *The Mysteries of Udolpho.* The author, pursuing her own favourite bent of compo-

sition, and again waving her wand over the worl of wonder and imagination, had judiciously used spell of broader and more potent command. Th situation and distresses of the heroines, have her and in *The Romance of the Forest*, a general aspe of similarity. Both are divided from the object their attachment by the gloomy influence of unfaith ful and oppressive guardians, and both becom inhabitants of time-stricken towers, and witnesse of scenes now bordering on the supernatural, an now upon the horrible. But this general resem blance is only such as we love to recognise in picture which have been painted by the same hand, and a companions for each other. Every thing in *Th Mysteries of Udolpho* is on a larger and mor sublime scale, than in *The Romance of the Forest* the interest is of a more agitating and tremendou nature; the scenery of a wilder and more terrifi description; the characters distinguished by fierce and more gigantic features. Montoni, a lofty souled desperado, and Captain of Condottieri, stand beside La Motte and his Marquis, like one o Milton's fiends beside a witch's familiar. Adelin is confined within a ruined manor-house, but he sister heroine, Emily, is imprisoned in a huge castle like those of feudal times; the one is attacked and defended by bands of armed banditti, the other only threatened by a visit from constables and thief-takers. The scale of the landscape is equally different; the quiet and limited woodland scenery of the one work forming a contrast with the splendid and high-wrought descriptions of Italian mountain grandeur which occur in the other.

In general, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* was, at its first appearance, considered as a step beyond Mrs Radcliffe's former work, high as that had justly advanced her. We entertain the same opinion in again reading them both, even after some years' interval. Yet there were persons of no mean judgment, to whom the simplicity of *The Romance of the Forest* seemed preferable to the more highly coloured and broader style of *The Mysteries of Udolpho;* and it must remain matter of opinion, whether their preference be better founded than in the partialities of a first love, which in literature, as in life, are often unduly predominant. With the majority of readers, the superior magnificence of landscape, and dignity of conception of character, secured the palm for the more recent work.

The fifth production by which Mrs Radcliffe arrested the attention of the public, was fated to be her last. *The Italian*, which appeared in 1797, was purchased by the booksellers for L.800, and obtained a share of public favour equal to any of its predecessors. Here, too, the author had, with much judgment, taken such a point of distance and distinction, that while employing her own peculiar talent, and painting in the style of which she may be considered the inventor, she cannot be charged with repeating or copying herself. She selected the new and powerful machinery afforded her by the Popish religion, when established in its paramount superiority, and thereby had at her disposal, monks, spies, dungeons, the mute obedience of the bigot, the dark and dominating spirit of the crafty priest,—all the thunders of the Vatican, and all the

terrors of the Inquisition. This fortunate adoption placed in the hands of the authoress a powerful set of agents, who were at once supplied with means and motives for bringing forward scenes of horror; and thus a tinge of probability was thrown over even those parts of the story, which are most inconsistent with the ordinary train of human events.

Most writers of romance have been desirous to introduce their narrative to the reader, in some manner which might at once excite interest, and prepare his mind for the species of excitation which it was the author's object to produce. In *The Italian*, this has been achieved by Mrs Radcliffe with an uncommon degree of felicity; nor is there any part of the romance itself which is more striking, than its impressive commencement.

A party of English travellers visit a Neapolitan church:—

"Within the shade of the portico, a person with folded arms, and eyes directed towards the ground, was pacing behind the pillars the whole extent of the pavement, and was apparently so engaged by his own thoughts, as not to observe that strangers were approaching. He turned, however, suddenly, as if startled by the sound of steps, and then, without farther pausing, glided to a door that opened into the church, and disappeared.

"There was something too extraordinary in the figure of this man, and too singular in his conduct, to pass unnoticed by the visitors. He was of a tall thin figure, bending forward from the shoulders; of a sallow complexion, and harsh features, and had an eye which, as it looked up from the cloak that muffled the lower part of his countenance, was expressive of uncommon ferocity.

"The travellers, on entering the church, looked round for the stranger, who had passed thither before them, but he was nowhere to be seen; and, through all the shade of the long aisles, only one other person appeared. This was a friar of the adjoin-

ing convent, who sometimes pointed out to strangers the objects in the church which were most worthy of attention, and who now, with this design, approached the party that had just entered.

"When the party had viewed the different shrines and whatever had been judged worthy of observation, and were returning through an obscure aisle towards the portico, they perceived the person who had appeared upon the steps, passing towards a confessional on the left, and, as he entered it, one of the party pointed him out to the friar, and enquired who he was; the friar turning to look after him, did not immediately reply, but, on the question being repeated, he inclined his head, as in a kind of obeisance, and calmly replied, 'He is an assassin.'

"'An assassin!' exclaimed one of the Englishmen; 'an assassin, and at liberty!'

"An Italian gentleman, who was of the party, smiled at the astonishment of his friend.

"'He has sought sanctuary here,' replied the friar; 'within these walls he may not be hurt.'

"'Do your altars, then, protect a murderer!' said the Englishman.

"'He could find shelter nowhere else,' answered the friar, meekly.

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"'But observe yonder confessional,' added the Italian, 'that beyond the pillars on the left of the aisle, below a painted window. Have you discovered it? The colours of the glass throw, instead of a light, a shade over that part of the church, which, perhaps, prevents your distinguishing what I mean.'

"The Englishman looked whither his friend pointed, and observed a confessional of oak, or some very dark wood, adjoining the wall, and remarked also, that it was the same which the assassin had just entered. It consisted of three compartments, covered with a black canopy. In the central division was the chair of the confessor, elevated by several steps above the pavement of the church; and on either hand was a small closet, or box, with steps leading up to a grated partition, at which the penitent might kneel, and, concealed from observation, pour into the ear of the confessor, the consciousness of crimes that lay heavy at his heart.

"'You observe it?' said the Italian.

"'I do,' replied the Englishman: 'it is the same which the assassin had passed into; and I think it one of the most gloomy

spots I ever beheld; the view of it is enough to strike a criminal with despair!'

"'We, in Italy, are not so apt to despair,' replied the Italian, smilingly.

"'Well, but what of this confessional?' enquired the Englishman. 'The assassin entered it.'

"'He has no relation with what I am about to mention,' said the Italian; 'but I wish you to mark the place, because some very extraordinary circumstances belong to it.'

"'What are they?' said the Englishman.

"'It is now several years since the confession, which is connected with them, was made at that very confessional,' added the Italian; 'the view of it, and the sight of the assassin, with your surprise at the liberty which is allowed him, led me to a recollection of the story. When you return to the hotel, I will communicate it to you, if you have no pleasanter mode of engaging your time.'

"'After I have taken another view of this solemn edifice,' replied the Englishman, 'and particularly of the confessional you have pointed to my notice.'

"While the Englishman glanced his eye over the high roofs, and along the solemn perspectives of the Santa del Pianto, he perceived the figure of the assassin stealing from the confessional across the choir, and, shocked on again beholding him, he turned his eyes, and hastily quitted the church.

"The friends then separated, and the Englishman, soon after returning to his hotel, received the volume. He read as follows.'

This introductory passage, which, for the references which it bears to the story, and the anxious curiosity it excites in the reader's mind, may be compared to the dark and vaulted gateway of an ancient castle, is followed by a tale of corresponding mystery and terror; in detailing which, the art of Mrs Radcliffe, who was so great a mistress of throwing her narrative into mystery, affording half intimations of veiled and secret horrors, is used perhaps to the very uttermost. And yet, though our reason ultimately presents us with this criticism, we believe she generally suspends her remonstrance

till the perusal is ended; and it is not until the last page is read, and the last volume closed, that we feel ourselves disposed to censure that which has so keenly interested us. We become then at length aware, that there is no uncommon merit in the general contrivance of the story; that many of the incidents are improbable, and some of the mysteries left unexplained; yet the impression of general delight which we have received from the perusal, remains unabated, for it is founded on recollection of the powerful emotions of wonder, curiosity, even fear, to which we have been subjected during the currency of the narrative.

A youth of high birth and noble estates becomes enamoured of a damsel of low fortunes, unknown race, and all that portion of beauty and talents which belongs to a heroine of romance. Their union is opposed by his family, and chiefly by the pride of his mother, who calls to her aid the real hero of the tale, her confessor, Father Schedoni, a strongly drawn character as ever stalked through the regions of romance, equally detestable for the crimes he has formerly perpetrated, and those which he is willing to commit; formidable from his talents and energy; at once a hypocrite and a profligate, unfeeling, unrelenting, and implacable. With the aid of this agent, Vivaldi, the lover, is thrown into the dungeons of the Inquisition, while Ellena, his bride, is carried by the pitiless monk to an obscure den, where, finding the services of an associate likely to foil his expectation, he resolves to murder her with his own hand. Hitherto the story, or, at least, the situation, is not altogether

dissimilar from the *Mysteries of Udolpho*; but the fine scene, where the monk, in the act of raising his arm to murder his sleeping victim, discovers her to be his own child, is of a new, grand, and powerful character; and the horrors of the wretch, who, on the brink of murder, has but just escaped from committing a crime of yet more exaggerated horror, constitute the strongest painting which has been produced by Mrs Radcliffe's pencil, and form a crisis well fitted to be actually embodied on canvass by some great master. In the prisons of the Inquisition, the terrific Schedoni is met, counterplotted, and at length convicted, by the agency of a being as wicked as himself, who had once enjoyed his confidence. Several pauses of breathless suspense are thrown in, during the detail of these intrigues, by which Mrs Radcliffe knew so well how to give interest to the work.

On reconsidering the narrative, we indeed discover that many of the incidents are imperfectly explained, and that we can distinguish points upon which the authoress had doubtless intended to lay the foundation of something which she afterwards forgot or omitted. Of the first class, is the astonishment testified by the Grand Inquisitor with such striking effect, when a strange voice was heard, even in the awful presence of that stern tribunal, to assume the task of interrogation proper to its judges. The incident in itself is most impressive. As Vivaldi is blindfolded, and bound upon the rack, the voice of a mysterious agent, who had repeatedly crossed his path, and always eluded his search, is heard to mingle in his exami-

nation, and strikes the whole assembly with consternation.

"'Who is come amongst us?' he [the Grand Inquisitor] repeated, in a louder tone. Still no answer was returned; but again a confused murmur sounded from the tribunal, and a general consternation seemed to prevail. No person spoke with sufficient preeminence to be understood by Vivaldi; something extraordinary appeared to be passing, and he awaited the issue with all the patience he could command. Soon after he heard the doors opened, and the noise of persons quitting the chamber. A deep silence followed; but he was certain that the familiars were still beside him, waiting to begin their work of torture."

This is all unquestionably very impressive; but no other explanation of the intruder's character is given, than that he is an officer of the Inquisition; a circumstance which may explain his being present at Vivaldi's examination, but by no means his interference with it, against the pleasure of the Grand Inquisitor. The latter certainly would neither have been surprised at the presence of one of his own officials, nor overawed by his deportment; since the one was a point of ordinary duty, and the other must have been accounted as an impertinence. It may be added also, that there is no full or satisfactory reason assigned for the fell and unpitying hostility of Zampari to Schedoni, and that the reasons which can be gathered are inadequate and trivial.

We may notice an instance of even greater negligence, in the passages respecting the ruined palace of the Baron di Cambrusca, where the imperfect tale of horror hinted at by a peasant, the guide of Schedoni, appears to jar upon the galled conscience of the monk, and induces the reader to expect

a train of important consequences. Unquestionably, the ingenious authoress had meant this half-told tale to correspond with some particulars in the proposed developement of the story, which having been finished more hastily, or in a different manner from what she intended, she had, like a careless knitter, neglected to take up her "loose stitches." It is, however, a baulking of the reader's imagination, which authors in this department would do well to guard against. At the same time, critics are bound in mercy to remember, how much more easy it is to devise a complicated chain of interest, than to disentangle it with perfect felicity. Dryden, it is said, used to curse the inventors of fifth acts in the drama, and romance-writers owe no blessings to the memory of him who devised explanatory chapters.

We have been told, that in this beautiful romance, the customs and rules of the Inquisition have been violated; a charge more easily made than proved, and which, if true, is of minor importance, because its code is happily but little known to us. It is matter of more obvious criticism, and therefore a greater error, that the scraps of Italian language introduced to give locality to the scene, are not happily chosen, and savour of affectation. But if Mrs Radcliffe did not intimately understand the language and manners of Italy, the following extract may prove how well she knew how to paint Italian scenery, which she could only have seen in the pictures of Claude or Poussin.

"These excursions sometimes led to Puzzuoli, Baia, or the woody cliffs of Pausilippo; and as, on their return, they

glided along the moonlight bay, the melodies of Italian strains seemed to give enchantment to the scenery of its shore. At this cool hour the voices of the vine-dressers were frequently heard in trio, as they reposed, after the labour of the day, on some pleasant promontory, under the shade of poplars; or the brisk music of the dance from fishermen, on the margin of the waves below. The boatmen rested on their oars, while their company listened to voices modulated by sensibility to finer eloquence, than it is in the power of art alone to display; and at others, while they observed the airy natural grace, which distinguishes the dance of the fishermen and peasant girls of Naples. Frequently, as they glided round a promontory, whose shaggy masses impended far over the sea, such magic scenes of beauty unfolded, adorned by these dancing groups on the bay beyond, as no pencil could do justice to. The deep clear waters reflected every image of the landscape; the cliffs, branching into wild forms, crowned with groves, whose rough foliage often spread down their steeps in picturesque luxuriance; the ruined villa, on some bold point, peeping through the trees; peasants' cabins hanging on the precipices, and the dancing figures on the strand—all touched with the silvery tint and soft shadows of moonlight. On the other hand, the sea, trembling with a long line of radiance, and showing in the clear distance the sails of vessels stealing in every direction along its surface, presented a prospect as grand as the landscape was beautiful."

There are other descriptive passages, which, like those in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, approach more nearly to the style of Salvator Rosa.

The Italian was received with as much ardour as Mrs Radcliffe's two previous novels, and it was from no coldness on the part of the public, that, like an actress in full possession of applauded powers, she chose to retreat from the stage in the blaze of her fame. After publication of *The Italian*, in 1797, the public were not favoured with any more of Mrs Radcliffe's works.

We are left in vain to conjecture the reasons, which, for more than twenty years, condemned an

imagination so fertile, so far as the public were concerned, to sterility. The voice of unfriendly criticism, always as sure an attendant upon merit as envy herself, may perhaps have intimidated the gentleness of her character; or Mrs Radcliffe, as frequently happens, may have been disgusted at seeing the mode of composition, which she had brought into fashion, profaned by the host of servile imitators, who could only copy and render more prominent her defects, without aspiring to her merits. But so steadily did she keep her resolution, that for more than twenty years the name of Mrs Radcliffe was never mentioned, unless with reference to her former productions, and in general (so retired was the current of her life) there was a belief that Fate had removed her from the scene.

Notwithstanding her refraining from publication, it is impossible to believe that an imagination so strong, supported by such ready powers of expression, should have remained inactive during so long a period; but the manuscripts on which she was occasionally employed, have as yet been withheld from the public. We have reason to believe, that arrangements were at one time almost concluded between Mrs Radcliffe and a highly respectable publishing-house, respecting a poetical romance, but were broken off in consequence of the author changing or delaying her intention of publication. It is to be hoped, that the world will not be ultimately deprived of what undoubtedly must be the source of much pleasure whenever it shall see the light.

The tenor of Mrs Radcliffe's private life seems

to have been peculiarly calm and sequestered. She probably declined the sort of personal notoriety which, in London society, usually attaches to persons of literary merit; and, perhaps, no author whose works were so universally read and admired, was so little personally known even to the most active of that class of people of distinction, who rest their peculiar pretensions to fashion upon the selection of literary society. Her estate was certainly not the less gracious; and it did not disturb Mrs Radcliffe's domestic comforts, although many of her admirers believed, and some are not yet undeceived, that, in consequence of brooding over the terrors which she depicted, her reason had at length been overturned, and that the author of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* only existed as the melancholy inmate of a private mad-house. This report was so generally spread, and so confidently repeated in print, as well as in conversation, that the Editor believed it for several years, until, greatly to his satisfaction, he learned, from good authority, that there neither was, nor ever had been, the most distant foundation for this unpleasing rumour.

A false report of another kind gave Mrs Radcliffe much concern. In Miss Seward's Correspondence, among the literary gossip of the day, it is roundly stated, that the *Plays upon the Passions* were Mrs Radcliffe's, and that she owned them.[1] Mrs Radcliffe was much hurt at being reported capable of borrowing from the fame of a gifted sis-

[1] [See a Letter, dated May, 1799, in Miss Seward's Correspondence, edited by Sir W. Scott.]

ter; and the late Miss Seward would, no doubt, have suffered equally, had she been aware of the pain she inflicted by giving currency to a rumour so totally unfounded. The truth is, that, residing at a distance from the metropolis, and living upon literary intelligence as her daily food, Miss Seward was sometimes imposed upon by those friendly caterers, who were more anxious to supply her with the newest intelligence, than solicitous about its accuracy.

During the last twelve years of her life, Mrs Radcliffe suffered from a spasmodic asthma, which considerably affected her general health and spirits. This chronic disorder took a more fatal turn upon the 9th of January, 1823; and upon the 7th of February following, terminated the life of this ingenious and amiable lady, at her own house in London.

MRS RADCLIFFE, as an author, has the most decided claim to take her place among the favoured few, who have been distinguished as the founders of a class, or school. She led the way in a peculiar style of composition, affecting powerfully the mind of the reader, which has since been attempted by many, but in which no one has attained or approached the excellences of the original inventor, unless perhaps the author of *The Family of Montorio*.[1]

[1] [The Rev. Charles Maturin of Dublin, who died in October 1824; and whose talents were first brought into notice by Sir W. Scott's article on Montorio, in the *Quarterly Review* for May, 1810.]

The species of romance which Mrs Radcliffe introduced, bears nearly the same relation to the novel that the modern anomaly entitled a melo-drame does to the proper drama. It does not appeal to the judgment by deep delineations of human feeling, or stir the passions by scenes of deep pathos, or awaken the fancy by tracing out, with spirit and vivacity, the lighter marks of life and manners, or excite mirth by strong representations of the ludicrous or humorous. In other words, it attains its interest neither by the path of comedy nor of tragedy; and yet it has, notwithstanding, a deep, decided, and powerful effect, gained by means independent of both—by an appeal, in one word, to the passion of fear, whether excited by natural dangers, or by the suggestions of superstition. The force, therefore, of the production, lies in the delineation of external incident, while the characters of the agents, like the figures in many landscapes, are entirely subordinate to the scenes in which they are placed; and are only distinguished by such outlines as make them seem appropriate to the rocks and trees, which have been the artist's principal objects. The persons introduced—and here also the correspondence holds betwixt the melo-drame and the romantic novel—bear the features, not of individuals, but of the class to which they belong. A dark and tyrannical count; an aged crone of a housekeeper, the depositary of many a family legend; a garrulous waiting-maid; a gay and light-hearted valet; a villain or two of all work; and a heroine, fulfilled with all perfections, and subjected to all manner of hazards,

form the stock-in-trade of a romancer or a melodramatist; and if these personages be dressed in the proper costume, and converse in language sufficiently appropriate to their stations and qualities, it is not expected that the audience shall shake their sides at the humour of the dialogue, or weep over its pathos.

On the other hand, it is necessary that these characters, though not delineated with individual features, should be truly and forcibly sketched in the outline; that their dress and general appearance should correspond with and support the trick of the scene; and that their language and demeanour should either enhance the terrors amongst which they move, or form, as the action may demand, a strong and vivid contrast to them. Mrs Radcliffe's powers of fancy were particularly happy in depicting such personages, in throwing upon them and their actions just enough of that dubious light which mystery requires, and in supplying them with language and manners which correspond with their situation and business upon the scene.[1] We may

[1] [" This prelude, like the tuning of an instrument by a skilful hand, has the effect of producing at once in the mind a tone of feeling correspondent to the future story. In this, as in the former productions, the curiosity of the reader is kept upon the stretch by mystery and wonder. The author seems perfectly to understand that obscurity, as Burke has asserted, is a strong ingredient in the sublime; a face shrouded in a cowl; a narrative suddenly suspended; deep guilt half revealed; the untold secrets of a prison-house; the terrific shape, 'if shape it might be called that shape had none distinguishable;'—all these affect the mind more powerfully than any regular or distinct images of danger or of woe."—MRS BARBAULD.]

take, as an example, the admirable description of the monk Schedoni:

"His figure was striking, but not so from grace; it was tall, and, though extremely thin, his limbs were large and uncouth, and as he stalked along, wrapt in the black garments of his order, there was something terrible in his air; something almost superhuman. His cowl, too, as it threw a shade over the livid paleness of his face, increased its severe character, and gave an effect to his large melancholy eye, which approached to horror. His was not the melancholy of a sensible and wounded heart, but apparently that of a gloomy and ferocious disposition. There was something in his physiognomy extremely singular, and that cannot easily be defined. It bore the traces of many passions, which seemed to have fixed the features they no longer animated. An habitual gloom and severity prevailed over the deep lines of his countenance;[1] and his eyes were so piercing, that they seemed to penetrate, at a single glance, into the hearts of men, and to read their most secret thoughts; few persons could support their scrutiny, or even endure to meet them twice.[2] Yet, notwithstanding all this gloom and austerity, some rare occasions of interest had called forth a character upon his countenance entirely different; and he could adapt himself to the tempers and passions of persons whom he wished to conci-

[1] ["The flash of that dilating eye
Reveals too much of times gone by;
Though varying, indistinct its hue,
Oft will his glance the gazer rue,
For in it lurks that nameless spell,
Which speaks, itself unspeakable.
— — — — — —
— — — Such ghastly mirth
From joyaunce ne'er derived its birth.
But sadder still it were to trace
What once were feelings in that face."
The Giaour.]

[2] ["His features' deepening lines and varying hue
At times attracted, yet perplex'd the view,
As if within that murkiness of mind
Work'd feelings fearful, and yet undefined;
Such might it be—that none can truly tell—
Too close enquiry his stern glance would quell.
There breathe but few whose aspect might defy
The full encounter of his searching eye:

liate with astonishing facility, and generally with complete triumph.[1] This monk, this Schedoni, was the confessor and secret adviser of the Marchesa di Vivaldi."

To draw such portraits as Schedoni's, and others which occur in Mrs Radcliffe's novels, requires no mean powers; and although they belong rather to romance than to real life, the impression which they make upon the imagination is scarce lessened by the sense, that they are in some sort as fabulous as fairies or ogres. But when the public have been surprised into a universal burst of applause, it is their custom to indemnify themselves by a corresponding degree of censure; just as children, when tired of admiring a new plaything, find a fresh and distinct pleasure in breaking it to pieces. Mrs Radcliffe, who had afforded such general delight to the public, was not doomed to escape the common fate; and the criticism with which she was assailed, was the more invidious, that it was inflicted, in more than one case, by persons of genius, who followed the same pursuit with herself. It

He had the skill, when Cunning's gaze would seek
To probe his heart and watch his changing cheek,
At once the observer's purpose to espy,
And on himself roll back his scrutiny."
The Corsair.]

[1] [" Time hath not yet the features fix'd,
But brighter traits with evil mix'd;
And there are hues not always faded,
Which speak a mind not all degraded
Even by the crimes through which it waded:
The common crowd but see the gloom
Of wayward deeds, and fitting doom;
The close observer can espy
A noble soul and lineage high:
Alas! though both bestow'd in vain,
Which Grief could change, and Guilt could stain,
It was no vulgar tenement," &c.
The Giaour.]

was the cry at the period, and has sometimes been repeated since, that the romances of Mrs Radcliffe, and the applause with which they were received, were evil signs of the times, and argued a great and increasing degradation of the public taste, which, instead of banqueting as heretofore upon scenes of passion, like those of Richardson, or of life and manners, as in the pages of Smollett and Fielding, was now coming back to the fare of the nursery, and gorged upon the wild and improbable fictions of an overheated imagination. There might be some truth in this, if it were only applied to the crowd of copyists who came forward in imitation of Mrs Radcliffe, and assumed her magic wand, without having the power of wielding it with effect. No author can be arraigned for the deficiencies of those who servilely copy his style, and, following their original as the shadow follows the substance, present an obscure, distorted, and indistinct outline of what is in itself clear, precise, and distinct. But the inferiority of this servile race is much more like to put the particular style they imitate out of fashion, than to engraft its peculiarities upon the public taste.

When applied to Mrs Radcliffe herself, the tone of criticism which we allude to will, when justly examined, be found to rest chiefly on that depreciating spirit, which would undermine the fair fame of an accomplished writer, by showing that she does not possess the excellences proper to a style of composition totally different from that which she has attempted. The question is neither, whether the romances of Mrs Radcliffe possess

merits which her plan did not require, nay, alm
excluded; nor whether hers is to be considered
a department of fictitious composition, equal in d
nity and importance to those where the great anci
masters have long pre-occupied the ground. T
real and only point is, whether, considered a
separate and distinct species of writing, that int
duced by Mrs Radcliffe possesses merit, and affo
pleasure; for, these premises being admitted, i
as unreasonable to complain of the absence
advantages foreign to her style and plan, and pro
to those of another mode of composition, as
regret that the peach-tree does not produce grap
or the vine peaches. A glance upon the face
nature is, perhaps, the best cure for this unj
and unworthy system of criticism. We there b
hold, that not only each star differs from anoth
in glory, but that there is spread over the face
Nature a boundless variety; and that as a thousa
different kinds of shrubs and flowers, not only ha
beauties independent of each other, but are mo
delightful from that very circumstance than if th
were uniform, so the fields of literature admit t
same variety; and it may be said of the Muse
Fiction, as well as of her sisters,

"Mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet."

It may be stated, to the additional confusion
such hypercritics as we allude to, that not on
does the infinite variety of human tastes requi
different styles of composition for their gratifica
tion; but if there were to be selected one partic
lar structure of fiction, which possesses charms fo
the learned and unlearned, the grave and gay, th

gentleman and the clown, it would be perhaps that of those very romances which the severity of their criticism seeks to depreciate. There are many men too mercurial to be delighted by Richardson's beautiful, but protracted display of the passions; and there are some too dull to comprehend the wit of Le Sage, or too saturnine to relish the nature and spirit of Fielding: And yet these very individuals will with difficulty be divorced from *The Romance of the Forest*, or *The Mysteries of Udolpho;* for curiosity and a lurking love of mystery, together with a germ of superstition, are more general ingredients in the human mind, and more widely diffused through the mass of humanity, than either genuine taste for the comic, or true feeling of the pathetic. The unknown author of *The Pursuits of Literature*, who, in respect to common tales of terror,

> "boasts an English heart,
> Unused at ghosts or rattling bones to start,"

acknowledges, nevertheless, the legitimate character of Mrs Radcliffe's art, and pays no mean tribute to her skill. Of some sister novelists he talks with slight regard.

"Though all of them are ingenious ladies, yet they are too frequently whining and frisking in novels, till our girls' heads turn wild with impossible adventures; and now and then are tainted with democracy. Not so the mighty magician of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, bred and nourished by the Florentine muses in their secret solitary caverns, amid the paler shrines of Gothic superstition, and in all the dreariness of enchantment; a poetess whom Ariosto would with rapture have acknowledged as,

> ——'La nudrita
> Damigella Trivulzia AL SACRO SPECO.'—O. F. c. xlvi."

Mrs Radcliffe was not made acquainted with tl high compliment till long after the satire was pu lished; and its value was enhanced by the autho general severity of judgment, and by his perf acquaintance with the manners and language Italy, in which she had laid her scene.[1]

It is farther to be observed, that the same cl of critics who ridiculed these romances as unı tural and improbable, were disposed to detract fr the genius of the author, on account of the su posed facility of her task. Art or talent, they sa was not required to produce that sort of inter and emotion, which is perhaps, after all, mo strongly excited by a vulgar legend of a villa ghost, than by the high painting and laboured d scriptions of Mrs Radcliffe. But this criticism not much better founded than the former. T feelings of suspense and awful attention which s excites, are awakened by means of springs whi lie open indeed to the first touch, but which a

[1] [" Many other individuals of eminence in taste and li rature might be adverted to, as having also expressed the selves in strong terms of Mrs Radcliffe's genius. Dr Jose Warton, the Head Master of Winchester School, who w then at a very advanced period of life, told Mr George Robinso Mrs Radcliffe's publisher, that happening to take up T *Mysteries of Udolpho*, he was so fascinated, that he cou not go to bed until he had finished it, and that he actually s up a great part of the night for that purpose. Mr Sherid spoke of the same production with great praise; and M Fox, in a letter which he wrote to an intimate friend at t time when Mrs Radcliffe's works were the subject of gener conversation and remark, mentioned them all in terms high commendation, and entered into a particular examin tion and comparison of their respective merits."—MRS BA BAULD.]

peculiarly liable to be worn out by repeated pressure. The public soon, like Macbeth, become satiated with horrors, and indifferent to the strongest *stimuli* of that kind. It shows, therefore, the excellence and power of Mrs Radcliffe's genius, that she was able three times to bring back her readers with fresh appetite to a banquet of the same description ; while of her numerous imitators, who rang the changes upon old castles and forests, and "antres dire," scarcely one attracted attention, until Mr Lewis published his *Monk*, several years after she had resigned her pen.

The materials of these celebrated romances, and the means employed in conducting the narrative, are all selected with a view to the author's primary object, of moving the reader by ideas of impending danger, hidden guilt, supernatural visitings,—by all that is terrible, in short, combined with much that is wonderful. For this purpose, her scenery is generally as gloomy as her tale, and her personages are those at whose frown that gloom grows darker. She has uniformly (except in her first effort) selected for her place of action the south of Europe, where the human passions, like the weeds of the climate, are supposed to attain portentous growth under the fostering sun ; which abounds with ruined monuments of antiquity, as well as the more massive remnants of the middle ages ; and where feudal tyranny and Catholic superstition still continue to exercise their sway over the slave and bigot, and to indulge to the haughty lord, or more haughty priest, that sort of despotic power, the exercise of which seldom fails to deprave

the heart, and disorder the judgment. These c
cumstances are skilfully selected, to give probabil
to events which could not, without great violat
of truth, be represented as having taken place
England. Yet, even with the allowances wh
we make for foreign minds and manners, the unt
minating succession of misfortunes which pr
upon the heroine, strikes us as unnatural. She
continually struggling with the tide of adversi
and hurried downwards by its torrent; and if a
more gay description is occasionally introduced,
is only as a contrast, and not a relief, to the mel
choly and gloomy tenor of the narrative.

In working upon the sensations of natural a
superstitious fear, Mrs Radcliffe has made mu
use of obscurity and suspense, the most fert
source, perhaps, of sublime emotion; for there a
few dangers that do not become familiar to t
firm mind, if they are presented to consideration
certainties, and in all their open and declared ch
racter; whilst, on the other hand, the bravest ha
shrunk from the dark and the doubtful. To bre
off the narrative, when it seemed at the point
becoming most interesting—to extinguish a lam
just when a parchment containing some hideo
secret ought to have been read—to exhibit shadow
forms and half-heard sounds of woe, are resourc
which Mrs Radcliffe has employed with more effe
than any other writer of romance. It must be co
fessed, that in order to bring about these situation
some art or contrivance, on the part of the autho
is rather too visible. Her heroines voluntari
expose themselves to situations, which in nature

lonely female would certainly have avoided. They are too apt to choose the midnight hour for investigating the mysteries of a deserted chamber or secret passage, and generally are only supplied with an expiring lamp, when about to read the most interesting documents. The simplicity of the tale is thus somewhat injured—it is as if we witnessed a dressing up of the very phantom by which we are to be startled; and the imperfection, though redeemed by many beauties, did not escape the censure of criticism.

A principal characteristic of Mrs Radcliffe's romances, is the rule which the author imposed upon herself, that all the circumstances of her narrative, however mysterious, and apparently superhuman, were to be accounted for on natural principles, at the winding up of the story. It must be allowed, that this has not been done with uniform success, and that the author has been occasionally more successful in exciting interest and apprehension, than in giving either interest or dignity of explanation to the means she has made use of. Indeed, we have already noticed, as the torment of romance-writers, those necessary evils, the concluding chapters, when they must unravel the skein of adventures which they have been so industrious to perplex, and account for all the incidents which they have been at so much pains to render unaccountable. Were these great magicians, who deal in the wonderful and fearful, permitted to dismiss their spectres as they raise them, amidst the shadowy and indistinct light so favourable to the exhibition of phantasmagoria, without compel-

ling them into broad daylight, the task were co paratively easy, and the fine fragment of *Sir B trand* might have rivals in that department. I the modern author is not permitted to escape in t way. We are told of a formal old judge bef whom evidence was tendered, of the ghost o murdered person having declared to a witne that the prisoner at the bar was guilty: the jud admitted the evidence of the spirit to be excelle but denied his right to be heard through the mo of another, and ordered the spectre to be summon into open court. The public of the current d deal as rigidly, in moving for a *quo warranto* compel an explanation from the story-teller; a the author must either at once represent the kn as worthy of being severed by supernatural a and bring on the stage his actual fiend or ghost, like Mrs Radcliffe, explain by natural agency t whole marvels of his story.

We have already, in some brief remarks on *T Castle of Otranto*, avowed some preference for t more simple mode, of boldly avowing the use supernatural machinery.[1] Ghosts and witches, a

[1] [" We disapprove of the mode introduced by Mrs Ra cliffe, and followed by Mr Murphy and her other imitato of winding up their story with a solution, by which all t incidents appearing to partake of the mystic and marvello are resolved by very simple and natural causes. This seen to us to savour of the precaution of Snug the joiner; rather, it is as if the machinist, when the pantomime w over, should turn his scenes 'the seamy side without,' a expose the mechanical aids by which his delusions we accomplished. In one respect, indeed, it is worse manag ment, because the understanding spectator might be in so degree gratified by the view of engines, which, however rud

the whole tenets of superstition, having once, and at no late period, been matter of universal belief, warranted by legal authority, it would seem no great stretch upon the reader's credulity to require him, while reading of what his ancestors did, to credit for the time what those ancestors devoutly believed in. And yet, notwithstanding the success of Walpole and Maturin, (to whom we may add the author of *Forman*,) the management of such machinery must be acknowledged a task of a most delicate nature. "There is but one step," said

were well adapted to produce the effects which he had witnessed. But the machinery of *The Castle of Montorio*, when exhibited, is wholly inadequate to the gigantic operations ascribed to it. There is a total and absolute disproportion between the cause and effect, which must disgust every reader much more than if he were left under the delusion of ascribing the whole to supernatural agency. This latter resource has indeed many disadvantages, some of which we shall briefly notice. But it is an admitted expedient; appeals to the belief of all ages but our own; and still produces, when well managed, some effect even upon those who are most disposed to contemn its influence. We can, therefore, allow of supernatural agency to a certain extent, and for an appropriate purpose; but we never can consent that the effect of such agency shall be finally attributed to natural causes totally inadequate to its production. We can believe, for example, in Macbeth's witches, and tremble at their spells; but had we been informed, at the conclusion of the piece, that they were only three of his wife's chambermaids disguised for the purpose of imposing on the Thane's credulity, it would have added little to the credibility of the story, and entirely deprived it of the interest. In like manner we fling back upon the Radcliffe school their flat and ridiculous explanations, and plainly tell them, that they must either confine themselves to ordinary and natural events, or find adequate causes for those horrors and mysteries in which they love to involve us."—*Quarterly Review*, May, 1810.]

Bonaparte, "betwixt the sublime and the ridicu lous;" and in an age of universal incredulity, w must own it would require, at the present da the support of the highest powers, to save the su pernatural from slipping into the ludicrous. Th *Incredulus odi* is a formidable objection.

There are some modern authors, indeed, wh have endeavoured, ingeniously enough, to con pound betwixt ancient faith and modern incredul ty. They have exhibited phantoms, and narrat prophecies strangely accomplished, without givi a defined or absolute opinion, whether these are be referred to supernatural agency, or whether tl apparitions were produced (no uncommon case) l an overheated imagination, and the presages app rently verified by a casual, though singular, coinc dence of circumstances.[1] This is, however, an ev sion of the difficulty, not a solution; and beside it would be leading us too far from the prese

[1] ["Enthusiastic feelings of an impressive and solem nature, occur both in private and public life, which seem add ocular testimony to an intercourse betwixt earth and tl world beyond it. For example, the son who has been late deprived of his father, feels a sudden crisis approach, in whic he is anxious to have recourse to his sagacious advice, or bereaved husband earnestly desires again to behold the form which the grave has deprived him for ever—or, to use darker, yet very common instance, the wretched man wh has dipt his hand in his fellow-creature's blood, is haunted b the apprehension that the phantom of the slain stands by th bedside of his murderer. In all, or any of these cases, wh shall doubt that imagination, favoured by circumstances, h power to summon up to the organ of sight, spectres whic only exist in the minds of those by whom their appariti seems to be witnessed?"—Sir Walter Scott's *Demonolog* pp. 5, 6.]

subject, to consider to what point the author of a fictitious narrative is bound by his charter to gratify the curiosity of the public, and whether, as a painter of actual life, he is not entitled to leave something in shade, when the natural course of events conceals so many incidents in total darkness. Perhaps, upon the whole, this is the most artful mode of terminating such a tale of wonder, as it forms the means of compounding with the taste of two different classes of readers; those who, like children, demand that each particular circumstance and incident of the narrative shall be fully accounted for; and the more imaginative class, who, resembling men that walk for pleasure through a moonlight landscape, are more teazed than edified by the intrusive minuteness with which some well-meaning companion disturbs their reveries, divesting stock and stone of the shadowy semblances in which fancy had dressed them, and pertinaciously restoring to them the ordinary forms and commonplace meanness of reality.[1]

[1] [" Of this justly celebrated woman, the principal object seems to have been to raise powerful emotions of surprise, awe, and especially terror, by means and agents apparently supernatural. To effect this, she places her characters, and transports her readers, amid scenes which are calculated strongly to excite the mind, and to predispose it for spectral illusion: Gothic castles, gloomy abbeys, subterraneous passages, the haunts of banditti, the sobbing of the wind, and the howling of the storm, are all employed for this purpose; and, in order that these may have their full effect, the principal character in her romances is always a lovely and unprotected female, encompassed with snares, and surrounded by villains. But that in which the works of Mrs Radcliffe chiefly differ from those by which they are preceded, is, that in the *Castle of Otranto* and *Old English Baron*, the machinery is in fact

It may indeed be claimed as meritorious in Mr Radcliffe's mode of expounding her mysteries, tha it is founded in possibilities. Many situations hav occurred, highly tinctured with romantic inciden and feeling, the mysterious obscurity of which ha afterwards been explained by deception and conf deracy. Such have been the impostures of supe stition in all ages, and such delusions were al practised by the members of the Secret Tribuna in the middle ages, and in more modern times b the Rosicrucians and Illuminati, upon whose m chinations Schiller has founded the fine romance *The Ghost-Seer.* But Mrs Radcliffe has not ha recourse to so artificial a solution. Her heroin

supernatural, whereas the means and agents employed by M Radcliffe are in reality human, and such as can be, or at lea are professed to be, explained by natural events. By the means she certainly excites a very powerful interest, as t reader meanwhile experiences the full impression of the wo derful and terrific appearances; but there is one defect whic attends this mode of composition, and which seems indeed be inseparable from it. As it is the intention of the autho that the mysteries should be afterwards cleared up, they a all mountains in labour; and even when she is successful explaining the marvellous circumstances which have occu red, we feel disappointed that we should have been so agitat by trifles. But the truth is, they never are properly explai ed; and the author, in order to raise strong emotions of fe and horror in the body of the work, is tempted to go length to account for which the subsequent explanations seem utterl inadequate. Thus, for example, after all the wonder an dismay, and terror and expectation, excited by the mysterio chamber in the castle of Udolpho, how much are we disappoin ed and disgusted to find, that all this pother has been rais by a waxen statue! In short, we may say, not only of M Radcliffe's castles, but of her works in general, that the abound 'in *passages* that lead to nothing.'"—DUNLOP's *His tory of Fiction*, vol. iii., p. 385-6.]

often sustain the agony of fear, and her readers that of suspense, from incidents which, when explained, appear of an ordinary and trivial nature; and in this we do not greatly applaud her art. A stealthy step behind the arras, may doubtless, in some situations, and when the nerves are tuned to a certain pitch, have no small influence upon the imagination; but if the conscious listener discovers it to be only the noise made by the cat, the solemnity of the feeling is gone, and the visionary is at once angry with his senses for having been cheated, and with his reason for having acquiesced in the deception.[1] We fear that some such feeling of disappointment and displeasure attends most readers, when they read for the first time the unsatisfactory solution of the mysteries of the black pall and the wax figure, which has been adjourned from chapter to chapter, like something suppressed, because too horrible for the ear.

There is a separate inconvenience attending a narrative where the imagination has been long kept in suspense, and is at length imperfectly gratified by an explanation falling short of what the reader has expected; for, in such a case, the interest ter-

1 By a singular coincidence, the late lamented author of *Don Juan* has introduced this very idea into the last canto of that poem.

["The ghost, if ghost it were, seem'd a sweet soul
As ever lurk'd beneath a holy hood;
A dimpled chin, a neck of ivory, stole
Forth into something much like flesh and blood;
Back fell the sable frock and dreary cowl,
And they revealed—alas! that e'er they should!
In full, voluptuous, but *not o'ergrown* bulk,
The phantom of her frolic Grace—Fitz-Fulke!"]

minates on the first reading of the volumes, and cannot, so far as it rests upon a high degree of excitation, be recalled upon a second perusal. A plan of narrative, happily complicated and ingeniously resolved, continues to please after many readings; for, although the interest of eager curiosity is no more, it is supplied by the rational pleasure, which admires the author's art, and traces a thousand minute passages, which render the catastrophe probable, yet escape notice in the eagerness of a first perusal. But it is otherwise, when some inadequate cause is assigned for a strong emotion; the reader feels tricked, and as in the case of a child who has once seen the scenes of a theatre too nearly, the idea of pasteboard, cords, and pullies, destroys for ever the illusion with which they were first seen from the proper point of view. Such are the difficulties and dilemmas which attend the path of the professed story-teller, who, while it is expected of him that his narrative should be interesting and extraordinary, is neither permitted to explain its wonders, by referring them to ordinary causes, on account of their triteness, nor to supernatural agency, because of its incredibility. It is no wonder that, hemmed in by rules so strict, Mrs Radcliffe, a mistress of the art of exciting curiosity, has not been uniformly fortunate in the mode of gratifying it.

The best and most admired specimen of her art is the mysterious disappearance of Ludovico, after having undertaken to watch for a night in a haunted apartment; and the mind of the reader is finely wound up for some strange catastrophe, by the admirable ghost-story which he is represented as

perusing to amuse his solitude, as the scene closes upon him. Neither can it be denied, that the explanation afforded of this mysterious incident is as probable as romance requires, and in itself completely satisfactory. As this is perhaps the most favourable example of Mrs Radcliffe's peculiar skill in composition, the incidents of the black veil and the waxen figure, may be considered as instances where the explanation falls short of expectation, and disappoints the reader entirely. On the other hand, her art is at once, according to the classical precept, exerted and concealed in the beautiful and impressive passage, where the Marchesa is in the choir of the convent of San Nicolo, contriving with the atrocious Schedoni the murder of Ellena.

" 'Avoid violence, if that be possible,' she added, immediately comprehending him, 'but let her die quickly! The punishment is due to the crime.'

" The Marchesa happened, as she said this, to cast her eyes upon the inscription over a confessional, where appeared, in black letters, these awful words, 'God *hears thee!*' It appeared an awful warning; her countenance changed; it had struck upon her heart. Schedoni was too much engaged by his own thoughts to observe, or understand her silence. She soon recovered herself; and, considering that this was a common inscription for confessionals, disregarded what she had at first considered as a peculiar admonition; yet some moments elapsed before she could renew the subject.

" 'You were speaking of a place, father,' resumed the Marchesa—'you mentioned a'——

" 'Ay,' muttered the confessor, still musing—'in a chamber of that house there is'——

" 'What noise is that?' said the Marchesa, interrupting him. They listened. A few low and querulous notes of the organ sounded at a distance, and stopped again.

" 'What mournful music is that?' said the Marchesa, in a faltering voice; 'it was touched by a fearful hand! Vespers were over long ago?'

"'Daughter,' said Schedoni, somewhat sternly, 'you said you had a man's courage. Alas! you have a woman's heart.'

"'Excuse me, father; I know not why I feel this agitation, but I will command it.—That chamber?'

"'In that chamber,' resumed the confessor, 'is a secret door, constructed long ago.'

"'And for what purpose constructed?' said the fearful Marchesa.

"'Pardon me, daughter; 'tis sufficient that it is there; we will make a good use of it. Through that door—in the night—when she sleeps'——

"'I comprehend you,' said the Marchesa, 'I comprehend you. But why,—you have your reasons, no doubt,—but why the necessity of a secret door in a house which you say is so lonely—inhabited by only one person?'

"'A passage leads to the sea,' continued Schedoni, without replying to the question. 'There, on the shore, when darkness covers it; there, plunged amidst the waves, no stain shall hint of'——

"'Hark!' interrupted the Marchesa, starting, 'that note again!'

"The organ sounded faintly from the choir, and paused, as before. In the next moment, a slow chanting of voices was heard, mingling with the rising peal, in a strain particularly melancholy and solemn.

"'Who is dead?' said the Marchesa, changing countenance: 'it is a requiem!'

"'Peace be with the departed!' exclaimed Schedoni, and crossed himself; 'peace rest with his soul!'

"'Hark! to that chant,' said the Marchesa, in a trembling voice; 'it is a first requiem; the soul has but just quitted the body!'

"They listened in silence. The Marchesa was much affected; her complexion varied at every instant; her breathings were short and interrupted, and she even shed a few tears, but they were those of despair, rather than of sorrow."

Mrs Radcliffe's powers, both of language and description, have been justly estimated very highly. They bear, at the same time, considerable marks of that warm, and somewhat exuberant imagination, which dictated her works. Some artists are distin-

guished by precision and correctness of outline, others by the force and vividness of their colouring; and it is to the latter class that this author belongs. The landscapes of Mrs Radcliffe are far from equal in accuracy and truth to those of her contemporary, Mrs Charlotte Smith, whose sketches are so very graphical, that an artist would find little difficulty in actually painting from them. Those of Mrs Radcliffe, on the contrary, while they would supply the most noble and vigorous ideas, for producing a general effect, would leave the task of tracing a distinct and accurate outline to the imagination of the painter. As her story is usually enveloped in mystery, so there is, as it were, a haze over her landscapes, softening indeed the whole, and adding interest and dignity to particular parts, and thereby producing every effect which the author desired, but without communicating any absolutely precise or individual image to the reader. The beautiful description of the Castle of Udolpho, upon Emily's first approach to it, is of this character. It affords a noble subject for the pencil: but were six artists to attempt to embody it upon canvass, they would probably produce six drawings entirely dissimilar to each other, yet all of them equally authorized by the printed description, which, although a long one, is so beautiful a specimen of Mrs Radcliffe's peculiar talents, that we do not hesitate to insert it.

"Towards the close of the day, the road wound into a deep valley. Mountains, whose shaggy steeps appeared to be inaccessible, almost surrounded it. To the east, a vista opened, and exhibited the Apennines in their darkest horrors; and the long perspective of retiring summits rising over each other, their ridges clothed with

pines, exhibited a stronger image of grandeur, than any that Emily had yet seen. The sun had just sunk below the top of the mountains she was descending, whose long shadow stretched athwart the valley, but his sloping rays, shooting through an opening of the cliffs, touched with a yellow gleam the summits of the forest that hung upon the opposite steeps, and streamed in full splendour upon the towers and battlements of a castle that spread its extensive ramparts along the brow of a precipice above. The splendour of these illumined objects was heightened by the contrasted shade which involved the valley below.

" 'There,' said Montoni, speaking for the first time in several hours, 'is Udolpho.'

" Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle, which she understood to be Montoni's; for, though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the Gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark grey stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object. As she gazed, the light died away on its walls, leaving a melancholy purple tint, which spread deeper and deeper, as the thin vapour crept up the mountain, while the battlements above were still tipped with splendour. From these, too, the rays soon faded, and the whole edifice was invested with the solemn duskiness of evening. Silent, lonely, and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all who dared to invade its solitary reign. As the twilight deepened, its features became more awful in obscurity, and Emily continued to gaze, till its clustering towers were alone seen rising over the tops of the woods, beneath whose thick shade the carriages soon after began to ascend.

" The extent and darkness of these tall woods awakened terrific images in her mind, and she almost expected to see banditti start up from under the trees. At length the carriages emerged upon a heathy rock, and soon after reached the castle gates, where the deep tone of the portal bell, which was struck upon to give notice of their arrival, increased the fearful emotions that had assailed Emily. While they waited till the servant within should come to open the gates, she anxiously surveyed the edifice; but the gloom that overspread it, allowed her to distinguish little more than a part of its outline, with the massy walls of the ramparts, and to know that it was vast, ancient, and dreary. From the parts she saw, she judged of the heavy strength and extent of the whole. The gateway before her, leading into the courts, was of gigantic size, and was defended by two round towers, crowned by overhanging turrets, embattled, where, instead of banners, now waved

long grass and wild plants, that had taken root among the mouldering stones, and which seemed to sigh, as the breeze rolled past, over the desolation around them. The towers were united by a curtain, pierced and embattled also, below which appeared the pointed arch of a huge portcullis, surmounting the gates: from these, the walls of the ramparts extended to other towers, overlooking the precipice, whose shattered outline, appearing on a gleam that lingered in the west, told of the ravages of war.—Beyond these all was lost in the obscurity of evening."

We think it interesting to compare this splendid and beautiful fancy-picture with the precision displayed by the same author's pencil, when she was actually engaged in copying nature, and probably the reader will be of opinion, that *Udolpho* is an exquisite effect-piece, *Hardwick* a striking and faithful portrait.

"Northward, beyond London, we may make one stop, after a country, not otherwise necessary to be noticed, to mention Hardwick, in Derbyshire, a seat of the Duke of Devonshire, once the residence of the Earl of Shrewsbury, to whom Elizabeth deputed the custody of the unfortunate Mary. It stands on an easy height, a few miles to the left of the road from Mansfield to Chesterfield, and is approached through shady lanes, which conceal the view of it, till you are on the confines of the park. Three towers of hoary grey then rise with great majesty among old woods, and their summits appear to be covered with the lightly shivered fragments of battlements, which, however, are soon discovered to be perfectly carved open work, in which the letters E. S. frequently occur under a coronet, the initials, and the memorials of the vanity, of Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury, who built the present edifice. Its tall features, of a most picturesque tint, were finely disclosed between the luxuriant woods and over the lawns of the park, which every now and then let in a glimpse of the Derbyshire hills. The scenery reminded us of the exquisite descriptions of Harewood.

"The deep embowering shades that veil Elfrida and those of Hardwick, once veiled a form as lovely as the ideal graces of the poet, and conspired to a fate more tragical than that which Harewood witnessed.

"In front of the great gates of the castle court, the ground, adorned by old oaks, suddenly sinks to a darkly shadowed glade, and the view opens over the vale of Scarsdale, bounded by the wild mountains of the Peak. Immediately to the left of the present residence, some ruined features of the ancient one, enwreathed with the rich drapery of ivy, give an interest to the scene, which the later, but more historical structure, heightens and prolongs. We followed, not without emotion, the walk which Mary had so often trodden, to the folding-doors of the great hall, whose lofty grandeur, aided by silence, and seen under the influence of a lowering sky, suited the temper of the whole scene. The tall windows, which half subdue the light they admit, just allowed us to distinguish the large figures in the tapestry, above the oak wainscoting, and showed a colonnade of oak supporting a gallery along the bottom of the hall, with a pair of gigantic elk's horns flourishing between the windows opposite to the entrance. The scene of Mary's arrival, and her feelings upon entering this solemn shade, came involuntarily to the mind; the noise of horses feet, and many voices from the court; her proud, yet gentle and melancholy look, as, led by my Lord Keeper, she passed slowly up the hall; his somewhat obsequious, yet jealous and vigilant air, while, awed by her dignity and beauty, he remembers the terrors of his own queen; the silence and anxiety of her maids, and the bustle of the surrounding attendants.

"From the hall, a staircase ascends to the gallery of a small chapel, in which the chairs and cushions used by Mary still remain, and proceeds to the first story, where only one apartment bears memorials of her imprisonment,—the bed, tapestry, and chairs, having been worked by herself. This tapestry is richly embossed with emblematic figures, each with its title worked above it, and, having been scrupulously preserved, is still entire and fresh.

"Over the chimney of an adjoining dining-room, to which, as well as to other apartments on this floor, some modern furniture has been added, is this motto carved in oak:—

"'There is only this: To fear God, and keep his Commandments.' So much less valuable was timber than workmanship, when this mansion was constructed, that, where the staircases are not of stone, they are formed of solid oaken steps, instead of planks; such is that from the second, or state story, to the roof, whence, on clear days, York and Lincoln Cathedrals are said to be included in the extensive prospect. This second floor is that which gives its chief interest to the edifice. Nearly all the apart-

ments of it were allotted to Mary; some of them for state purposes; and the furniture is known by other proof than its appearance, to remain as she left it. The chief room, or that of audience, is of uncommon loftiness, and strikes by its grandeur, before the veneration and tenderness arise, which its antiquities, and the plainly told tale of the sufferings they witnessed, excite."[1]

The contrast of these two descriptions will satisfy the reader, that Mrs Radcliffe knew as well how to copy nature, as when to indulge imagination. The towers of Udolpho are undefined, boundless, and wreathed in mist and obscurity; the ruins of Hardwick are as fully and boldly painted, but with more exactness of outline, and perhaps less warmth and magnificence of colouring.

It is singular, that though Mrs Radcliffe's beautiful descriptions of foreign scenery, composed solely from the materials afforded by travellers, collected and embodied by her own genius, were marked in a particular degree (to our thinking at least) with the characteristics of fancy-portraits; yet many of her contemporaries conceived them to be exact descriptions of scenes which she had visited in person. One report, transmitted to the public by the *Edinburgh Review*, stated, that Mr and Mrs Radcliffe had visited Italy; that Mr Radcliffe had been attached to one of the British Embassies in that country; and that it was there his gifted consort imbibed the taste for picturesque scenery, for mouldering ruins, and for the obscure

[1] Journey through Holland and the Western Frontier of Germany, with a Return down the Rhine. To which are added, Observations during a Tour to the Lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland. By Ann Radcliffe. 4to, 1795. Page 371.

and gloomy anecdotes which tradition relates of their former inhabitants. This is so far a mistake, as Mrs Radcliffe never was in Italy; but we have already mentioned the probability of her having availed herself of the acquaintance she formed in 1793 with the magnificent scenery on the banks of the Rhine, and the frowning remains of feudal castles with which it abounds. The inaccuracy of the reviewer is of no great consequence ; but a more absurd report found its way into print, namely, that Mrs Radcliffe, having visited the fine old Gothic mansion of Haddon House, had insisted upon remaining a night there, in the course of which she had been inspired with all that enthusiasm for Gothic residences, hidden passages, and mouldering walls, which marks her writings. Mrs Radcliffe, we are assured, never saw Haddon House; and although it was a place excellently worth her attention, and could hardly have been seen by her without suggesting some of those ideas in which her imagination naturally revelled, yet we should suppose the mechanical aid to invention—the recipe for fine writing—the sleeping in a dismantled and unfurnished old house, was likely to be rewarded with nothing but a cold, and was an affectation of enthusiasm to which Mrs Radcliffe would have disdained to have recourse.

The warmth of imagination which Mrs Radcliffe manifests, was naturally connected with an inclination towards poetry, and accordingly songs, sonnets, and pieces of fugitive verse, amuse and relieve the reader in the course of her volumes. These

are not, in this place, the legitimate subject of criticism;[1] but it may be remarked, that they display more liveliness and richness of fancy, than correctness of taste, or felicity of expression. The language does not become pliant in Mrs Radcliffe's hands; and, unconscious of this defect, she has attempted, nevertheless, to bend it into new structures of verse, for which the English is not adapted. The song of the glow-worm is an experiment of this nature. It must also be allowed, that the imagination of the author sometimes carries her on too fast, and that if she herself formed a competent and perfect idea of what she meant to express, she has sometimes failed to convey it to the reader. At other and happier times, her poetry partakes of the rich and beautiful colouring which distinguishes her prose composition, and has, perhaps, the same fault, of not being in every case quite precise in expressing the meaning of the author. The following address to Melancholy may be fairly selected as a specimen of her powers.

[1] [" It ought not to be forgotten that there are many elegant pieces of poetry interspersed through the volumes of Mrs Radcliffe; among which are to be distinguished as exquisitely sweet and fanciful, the 'Song to a Spirit,' and 'The Sea Nymph,' 'Down, down, a hundred fathom deep;' they might be sung by Shakspeare's Ariel. The true lovers of poetry are almost apt to regret its being brought in as an accompaniment to narrative, where it is generally neglected; for not one in a hundred of those who read and can judge of novels are at all able to appreciate the merits of a copy of verses, and the common reader is always impatient to get on with the story."—MRS BARBAULD.]

"Spirit of love and sorrow—hail!
  Thy solemn voice from far I hear,
Mingling with evening's dying gale:
  Hail, with this sadly-pleasing tear!

"O! at this still, this lonely hour,
  Thine own sweet hour of closing day,
Awake thy lute, whose charmful power
  Shall call up fancy to obey;

"To paint the wild romantic dream,
  That meets the poet's musing eye,
As on the bank of shadowy stream
  He breathes to her the fervid sigh.

"O lonely spirit! let thy song
  Lead me through all thy sacred haunt;
The minster's moonlight aisles along,
  Where spectres raise the midnight chaunt.

"I hear their dirges faintly swell!
  Then, sink at once in silence drear,
While, from the pillar'd cloister's cell,
  Dimly their gliding forms appear!

"Lead where the pine-woods wave on high,
  Whose pathless sod is darkly seen,
As the cold moon, with trembling eye,
  Darts her long beams the leaves between.

"Lead to the mountain's dusky head,
  Where, far below, in shades profound,
Wide forests, plains, and hamlets spread,
  And sad the chimes of vesper sound.

"Or guide me where the dashing oar
  Just breaks the stillness of the vale,
As slow it tracks the winding shore,
  To meet the ocean's distant sail:

"To pebbly banks that Neptune laves,
  With measured surges, loud and deep,

Where the dark cliff bends o'er the waves,
And wild the winds of autumn sweep.

"There pause at midnight's spectred hour,
And list the long-resounding gale;
And catch the fleeting moonlight's power,
O'er foaming seas and distant sail."

It cannot, we think, be denied, that we have here beautiful ideas expressed in appropriate versification; yet here, as in her prose compositions, the poetess is too much busied with external objects, too anxious to describe the outward accompaniments of melancholy, to write upon the feeling itself; and although the comparison be made at the expense of a favourite author, we cannot help contrasting the poetry we have just inserted, with a song, by Fletcher, on a similar subject.

PAS. (*Sings.*) "Hence, all you vain delights,
As short as are the nights
Wherein you spend your folly!
There's nought in this life sweet,
If man were wise to see't,
But only melancholy!

Welcome, folded arms, and fixed eyes,
A sigh that piercing mortifies,
A look that's fasten'd to the ground,
A tongue chain'd up without a sound!
Fountain heads, and pathless groves,
Places which pale passion loves!
Moonlight walks, when all the fowls
Are warmly housed, save bats and owls!
A midnight bell, a parting groan!
These are the sounds we feed upon;
Then stretch our bones in a still gloomy valley,
Nothing's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy."

The Nice Valour.

In these last verses the reader may observe, that the human feeling of the votary of melancholy, or rather the pale passion itself, is predominant; that our thoughts are of, and with, the pensive wanderer; and that the "fountain heads and pathless groves," like the landscape in a portrait, are only secondary parts of the picture. In Mrs Radcliffe's verses, it is different. The accessaries and accompaniments of melancholy are well described, but they call for so much of our attention, that the feeling itself scarce solicits due regard. We are placed among melancholy objects, but our sadness is reflected from the scene, it is not the growth of our own minds. Something like this may be observed in Mrs Radcliffe's romances, where our curiosity is too much interested about the evolution of the story, to permit our feelings to be acted upon by the distresses of the hero or heroine. We do not acknowledge them as personal objects of our interest, and, convinced that the authoress will extricate them from their embarrassments, we are more concerned about the course of the story, than the feelings or fate of those of whom it is told.

But we must not take farewell of a favourite author with a depreciating sentiment. It may be true, that Mrs Radcliffe rather walks in fairy-land than in the region of realities, and that she has neither displayed the command of the human passions, nor the insight into the human heart, nor the observation of life and manners, which recommend other authors in the same line.[1] But she has

[1] ["In the writings of Mrs Radcliffe there is a considerable degree of uniformity and mannerism, which is perhaps

taken the lead in a line of composition, appealing to those powerful and general sources of interest, a latent sense of supernatural awe, and curiosity concerning whatever is hidden and mysterious; and if she has been ever nearly approached in this walk, which we should hesitate to affirm, it is at least certain, that she has never been excelled or even equalled.

We have been given to understand, we trust from good authority, that a posthumous work of Mrs Radcliffe's is likely soon to make its appearance. Come when it will, and contain almost what it may, it must be an acquisition to the public of no common interest.[1]

the case with all the productions of a strong and original genius. Her heroines too nearly resemble each other, or rather they possess hardly any shade of difference. They have all blue eyes and auburn hair—the form of each of them has 'the airy lightness of a nymph'—they are all fond of watching the setting sun, and catching the purple tints of evening, and the vivid glow or fading splendour of the western horizon. Unfortunately they are all likewise early risers. I say unfortunately, for in every exigency Mrs Radcliffe's heroines are provided with a pencil and paper, and the sun is never allowed to rise nor set in peace. Like Tilburina in the play, they are 'inconsolable to the minuet in Ariadne,' and in the most distressing circumstances find time to compose sonnets to sunrise, the bat, a sea-nymph, a lily, or a butterfly."—DUNLOP's *History of Fiction*, vol. iii., p. 387.]

[1] [As this sheet is passing through the press, the Editor observes the announcement of the "Poetical Works of Mrs Ann Radcliffe, now first collected, in two volumes, 8vo;" but whether the poetical Romance previously alluded to by Sir Walter Scott is to be included in this publication, does not appear.—May, 1834.]

ALAIN RENE LE SAGE.

We must on the present, as on former occasions, commence our biographical sketch of a delightful author, with the vain regret, that we can say little of his private life which can possibly interest the public. The distinguished men of genius, whom, after death, our admiration is led almost to canonize, have the lot of the holy men, who, spending their lives in obscurity, poverty, and maceration, incur contempt, and perhaps persecution, to have shrines built for the protection of their slightest relics, when once they are no more. Like the life of so many of those who have contributed most largely to the harmless enjoyments of mankind, that of Le Sage was laborious, obscure, and supported with difficulty by the precarious reward of his literary exertions.

Alain Rene Le Sage was born in a village near to the town of Vannes, in Britanny, about the year 1668. The profession of his father is not mentioned; but as he bequeathed some property to his son, he could not be of the very lowest rank. Unfortunately he died early, and his son fell under the tutelage of an uncle, so careless of one of the most sacred duties of humanity, that he neglected alike the fortune and education of his ward. The latter defect was in a great measure supplied by the

affection of the Père Bochard of the order of the Jesuits, Principal of the College of Vannes, who, interested in the talents displayed by the young Le Sage, took pleasure in cultivating his taste for literature. Our author, however, must have been late in attracting Bochard's notice; for when he came to Paris in 1693, in his twenty-fifth year, his principal object was to prosecute his philosophical studies, with what ultimate view does not appear.

With good-humour and liveliness, joined to youth, and, it is said, a remarkably handsome person, Le Sage soon felt the influence of the Parisian atmosphere, was much engaged in society, and distinguished by an intrigue with a woman of rank, who shared with him, as his biographer expresses it, her heart and fortune. How this amour terminated we are not told, but one of a better and more virtuous character succeeded. Le Sage became enamoured of a beautiful young woman, the daughter of a joiner in the Rue de la Mortellerie, married her, and, from that period, found his principal happiness in domestic affection. By this union he had three sons, whose fortunes we shall afterwards have occasion to mention, and a daughter, whose filial piety is said to have placed her sole occupation in contributing to the domestic enjoyment of her celebrated parent.

Le Sage continued after his marriage to frequent the circles of Paris, where literary men mingled as guests upon easy terms, and appears to have acquired several sincere and active friends, among whom the Abbé de Lyonne entitled himself not only to the author's personal gratitude, but to that

of posterity. He settled upon Le Sage a pension of six hundred livres, and made him, besides, many valuable presents, yet served him much more essentially by directing his attention to Spanish literature, which he was afterwards so singularly to com bine with that of his own country.[1]

Danchel, a man of some celebrity, engaged Le Sage in a translation of the *Letters of Aristenetus*, which he caused to be printed at Chartres, (though the title bears Rotterdam,) in 1695.

The particular circumstances of Spain had given a strong cast of originality to the character of their literature. The close neighbourhood of so many petty kingdoms, so frequently engaged in intestine wars, occasioned numerous individual adventures, which could not have taken place under any one established and extended government. The high romantic character of chivalry which was cherished by the natives, the vicinity of the Moors, who had imported with them the wild, imaginative, and splendid fictions of Araby the Blessed—the fierceness of the Spanish passions of love and vengeance, their thirst of honour, their unsparing cruelty,—placed all the materials of romance under the very eye of the author who wished to use them. If his characters were gigantic and overstrained in the conception, the writer had his apology in the temper of the nation where his scene was laid; if his incidents were extravagant and improbable, a country in which Castilians and Arragoneze, Spaniards

1 So early as 1704, Le Sage understood the language so well as to give a translation of Avellaneda's *Continuation of Don Quixote*, which gave so much offence to Cervantes.

and Moors, Mussulmans and Christians, had been at war for so many ages, could furnish historians with real events, which might countenance the boldest flights of the romance. And here it is impossible to avoid remarking, that the French, the gayest people in Europe, have formed their stage on a plan of declamatory eloquence, which all other nations have denounced as intolerable; while the Spaniard, grave, solemn, and stately, was the first to introduce in the theatre all the bustle of lively and complicated intrigue;—the flight and the escape, the mask and ladder of ropes, closets, dark-lanterns, trap-doors, and the whole machinery of constant and hurried action; and that with such a profusion of invention, that the Spanish stage forms a mine in which the dramatic authors of almost all other countries have wrought for ages, and are still working, with very slight chance either of failure or detection.

Le Sage was not slow in endeavouring to turn to his own advantage his acquaintance with the Spanish drama. He translated from the original of Don Francisco de Rojas, *Le Traître Puni*. It was not acted, but printed in the year 1700. Another play, *Don Felix de Mendocé*, he translated from Lope de Vega; but this also remained unacted, and was not even printed, until the author published his *Théâtre*, in 1739.

Le Point d'Honneur, another translation from the Spanish, was performed at the Théâtre François, in 1702, without success. The satire turned upon the pedantic punctilios formerly annexed to the discussion of personal "dependences," as they

were called, when men quarrelled by the book, and arranged a rencontre according to the rules of logic. This fantastic humour, which, so early as the age of Shakspeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher, had been successfully ridiculed on the English stage, was probably rather too antiquated to be the subject of satire on that of Paris, in the beginning of the 18th century. *The Point of Honour* was only twice represented.

In 1707, *Don Cæsar Ursin*, a comedy, translated by Le Sage from the Spanish of Calderon, was acted and condemned at the Théâtre François. To make the author some amends, the same audience received, with the most marked applause, the lively farce entitled *Crispin rival de son Maître*, which Garrick introduced upon the English stage under the title of *Neck or Nothing*. It is uncommon for a dramatic author to be applauded and condemned for two different pieces in the same day; but Le Sage's destiny was even still more whimsical. *Don Cæsar*, we have said, was hissed in the city, and *Crispin* applauded. At a representation before the court, the judgment was reversed—the play was applauded, and the farce condemned without mercy. Time has confirmed the judgment of the Parisians, and annulled that of Versailles.

Le Sage made yet another essay on the regular stage, with his comedy of *Turcaret*, in which he has painted the odious yet ridiculous character of a financier, risen from the lowest order of society by tricks and usury, prodigal of his newly acquired wealth upon a false and extravagant mistress of quality, and refusing to contribute even to relieve

the extreme necessity of his wife and near relations. As men of business, and a class so wealthy, the financiers have always possessed interest at court, and that interest seems to have been exerted with success to prevent so odious a personification of their body from appearing on the stage. The embargo was removed by an order of Monseigneur, dated 15th October, 1708. While the play was yet in his portfolio, Le Sage had an opportunity to show how little his temper was that of a courtier. He had been pressed to read his manuscript comedy at the Hotel de Bouillon, at the hour of noon, but was detained till two o'clock by the necessity of attending the decision of a lawsuit in which he was deeply interested. When he at length appeared, and endeavoured to plead his excuse, the Duchess of Bouillon received his apology with coldness, haughtily remarking, he had made the company lose two hours in waiting for his arrival.—" It is easy to make up the loss, madam," replied Le Sage; " I will not read my comedy, and you will thus regain the lost time." He left the hotel, and could never be prevailed on to return thither

Turcaret was acted, and was successful, in spite of the cabal formed against it by the exertions of those concerned in the finances.[1] The author, in

1 [" The French author who, in drawing character, approached the nearest to Molière, was perhaps Le Sage, in his *Turcaret*, which, however, is composed of many reminiscences from his great master. Both, indeed, had the common defect of painting manners, not characters, and, consequently, of producing comedies of classes, not of individuals. But this is a defect which the French public would not even perceive ;

imitation of Molière, added a sort of dramatic criticism, in which he defended the piece against the censures which had been passed against it. The speakers in this critical interlude were Don Cleofas and the Diable Boiteux. They appeared on the stage as unseen spectators of the representation of *Turcaret*, and spoke between the acts, like the assistants in Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour;* the tendency of the dialogue being to exult in the author's success, and ridicule the cabal by which it had been assailed. We learn, in the course of their conversation, that besides all the friends of the author, and all his friends' friends, a guard of the police was necessary to restrain the zeal of the clerks and dependents of the financial department. Asmodeus maintains his character as a satirist, and, pointing out to Don Cleofas a violent debate betwixt the friends and enemies of the piece, observes, that as it became warm, the one party spoke worse of the piece than they thought, and the other thought less good of it than they uttered.

Turcaret seems the only original piece which Le Sage composed on the plan of the French regular comedy; and though it had great poignancy of satire, the principal character on which the whole turns, is almost too worthless and too wicked to be ridiculous, or truly comic. Indeed *Turcaret* is rendered so odious, that revenge was said to have held the pallet when the colours were mixed; and there was an unauthorized story at one time cur-

and we are not aware that any critics of that nation have made the remark."—*Quarterly Review*, July, 1823.]

rent, that Le Sage, deprived by a financier of a place in the revenue, had written this dramatic satire to be revenged upon the whole body of *Maltôtiers*. The author, probably, was not without some offers of preferment, for he used to speak to his son of having *refused* situations in which others became rich, but where his conscience must have kept him poor—expressions too vague for a biographer to found any thing upon them, yet which seem to exclude the idea of his having held any employment under a farmer-general of the revenues. His connexion with the Théâtre François, on which alone such regular pieces can be presented, was soon afterwards broken off. Le Sage had offered to them, in 1708, a small piece, in one act, called *La Tontine*; it was not acted until 1732; and though the cause is not precisely known, it is obvious that the rejection gave much offence to the author. Le Sage was also much provoked at the airs of superiority assumed by the performers towards the authors, and he has recorded his revenge by the unfavourable and ridiculous colours in which he has represented the theatrical profession in his romance.

The truth seems to be, that his former attempts were unsuccessful, because they were founded upon the Spanish plan of intrigue, in incident and situation, and were not therefore much valued by the Parisians, whom the excellent Molière had accustomed to pieces of character and sentiment. *Turcaret* was indeed more in the taste of the age, and was accordingly better relished; but the scenes hang so loosely together, and the plot possesses so

little interest of any kind, that it may be termed rather a dramatic satire than a proper comedy. On the whole, Le Sage's failure as a comic poet will not excite the surprise of those who may have patience to peruse his plays.

For the sake of connexion, we may trace Le Sage's dramatic career to a period with the greater brevity, that it contains but little to interest the reader. From the service of the established National Theatre, Le Sage transferred his pen to those minor establishments, termed *De la Foire*, which did not pretend, and, indeed, were not permitted, to offer to the public regular dramas, but only to act vaudevilles, or small light interludes set to music, and where the music was supposed to be the principal attraction.

These subordinate theatres were a refinement upon the puppet-shows and such like exhibitions, which used to be shown during the two great Fairs of St Laurence and St Germain; and it was under this colour that the manager and actors of the *Foire* endeavoured to elude the monopoly enjoyed by the Théâtre François, and were alternately indulged or restricted in their privileges, as they were able to find protection at court. The sort of pieces represented at the *Foire*, came at length to bear the name of the Comic Opera, of which Le Sage was the soul. He composed, either entirely, or with the assistance of his friends, Dominique and Fuselier, no less than a hundred and upwards of these interludes, farces, and light pieces, which cost little effort to so inventive a genius, and wl h floated or sunk as popular opinion willed it, ne

omitting any opportunity which presented itself, to ridicule, parody, and satirize the *Romans*, for so the actors of the regular theatres were termed, in the cant language of the *Foire*. These exertions were attended with such a degree of profit, as, with the revenue arising from his other publications, enabled Le Sage, now the father of a family, to maintain himself and them in a calm and modest, but comfortable independence.

In 1721, the Comic Opera of the *Foire* was for a time suppressed. An attempt was made to continue the amusement, and elude the restriction, under different devices. For this purpose, Francisque, the manager, for whom Le Sage had long laboured, caused pieces, composed in monologue, to be acted on his stage. Le Sage and Fuselier, late the allies of Francisque, had recourse to another device, and acted their pieces as formerly, in music and dialogue, but by the intervention of puppets, instead of real actors—an idea which afterwards occurred to Fielding. These rival theatres carried on their several undertakings, in spite both of the comedians of the Théâtre François, and of each other, and some satirical skirmishes passed between them. In *Arlequin Deucalion*, a piece in monologue, written by the celebrated Piron, Le Sage and his consort Fuselier are subjected to ridicule by the following *jeu de mots :* Punchinello is made to ask, "*Pourquoi le fol de temps en temps ne diroit-il pas des bonnes choses, puisque* LE SAGE *de temps en temps dit de si mauvaises ?*" In the same piece, Arlequin throws a pair of pistols into the sea, praying there might never more be word spoken

le grenadier du fusil ni de FUSELIER." Such jests break no bones, and probably discomposed our author's temper as little as they injured his reputation. The embargo was removed from the performances at the *Foire*, in the course of about two years, and our author resumed his ordinary labours in behalf of its theatre, which he continued so late as the year 1738, during which he produced three pieces, which were probably his last dramatic efforts, as he had then attained his seventieth year.

It has been said of Le Sage's works, that no writings are more generally and widely known, than those of his which are remembered, while none are so decidedly and utterly forgotten as those which have been consigned to neglect. All the slight dramas which we have noticed, as forming so great and essential a part of the labours of his life, fall under the latter class—many have never been printed, and of those which have issued from the press, very few are now read. Nothing can be more slight than their texture. The whim of the day—any remarkable accident—any popular publication, affords a hint for the story. The airs, like those of the *Beggar's Opera*, are founded on the common popular ballads and vaudevilles, and nothing is too trivial or absurd to be admitted into the dialogue. At the same time, there occur touches both of wit, nature, and humour; as how could it be otherwise in the slightest works of Le Sage? The French critics, who are indisputably the best judges, incline to think, judging from *Turcaret*, that he would have risen to eminence, had he continued to cultivate the regular comedy, instead of

sinking into the minor and subordinate ranks of an occupation which he held in contempt, and which he probably thought could not be too slightly executed. Don Cleofas, in the *Critique de Turcaret*, says to Asmodeus, as they survey the audience at the Théâtre François, " *La belle assemblée ; que de dames !*—ASMODEE. *Il y en auroit encore d'avantage, sans les spectacle de la Foire. La plupart de femmes y courent avec fureur. Je suis ravi de les voir dans le gout de leurs lacquais et de leurs cochers.*"—Thus thought Le Sage originally of the dignity of those labours in which he was to spend his life, and the indifference with which he was contented to exercise his vocation, shows that his opinion of its importance was never enhanced. Goldoni, in circumstances nearly similar, created a national drama, and a taste for its beauties ; but Le Sage was to derive an undying name from works of a different description.

We willingly leave consideration of these ephemeral and forgotten effusions of the moment, composed for the small theatre of the *Foire*, to speak of the productions which must afford delight and interest, so long as human nature retains its present constitution. The first of these was *Le Diable Boiteux*, which Le Sage published in 1707. The title and plan of the work were derived from the Spanish of Luez Valez de Guevara, called *El Diablo Cojuelo*, and such satires on manners as had been long before written in Spain by Cervantes and others. But the fancy, the lightness, the spirit, the wit, and the vivacity of the *Diable Boiteux*,

were entirely communicated by the enchanting pen of the lively Frenchman. The plan of the work was in the highest degree interesting; and having, in its original concoction, at once a cast of the romantic and of the mystical, is calculated to interest and to attract by its own merit, as well as by the pleasing anecdotes and shrewd remarks upon human life, of which it forms, as it were, the frame-work and enchasing. The Mysteries of the Cabalists afforded a foundation for the story, which, grotesque as it is, was not in those times held to exceed the bounds of probable fiction; and the interlocutors of the scene are so happily adapted to the subjects of their conversation, that all they say and do has its own portion of natural appropriation.

It is impossible to conceive a being more fitted to comment upon the vices, and to ridicule the follies of humanity, than an *esprit follet* like Asmodeus, who is as much a decided creation of genius, in his way, as Ariel or Caliban. Without possessing the darker powers and propensities of a Fallen Angel, he presides over the vices and the follies, rather than the crimes of mankind—is malicious, rather than malignant; and his delight is to gibe, and to scoff, and to teaze, rather than to torture; —one of Satan's light infantry, in short, whose business is to goad, perplex, and disturb the ordinary train of society, rather than to break in upon and overthrow it. This character is maintained in all Asmodeus says and does, with so much spirit, wit, acuteness, and playful malice, that we never forget the fiend, even in those moments when he

is very near becoming amiable as well as entertaining.

Don Cleofas, to whom he makes all his diverting communications, is a fiery young Spaniard, proud, high-spirited, and revengeful, and just so much of a libertine as to fit him for the company of Asmodeus. He interests us personally by his gallantry and generous sentiments; and we are pleased with the mode in which the grateful fiend provides for the future happiness of his liberator. Of these two characters neither is absolutely original. But the Devil of Guevara is a mere bottle-conjurer, who amuses the student by tricks of legerdemain, intermixed with strokes of satire, some of them very acute, but devoid of the poignancy of Le Sage. Don Cleofas is a more literal copy from the Spanish author. There is no book in existence, in which so much of the human character, under all its various shades and phases, is described in so few words, as in the *Diable Boiteux*. Every page, every line, bears marks of that sure tact and accurate developement of human weakness and folly, which tempt us to think we are actually listening to a Superior Intelligence, who sees into our minds and motives, and, in malicious sport, tears away the veil which we endeavour to interpose betwixt these and our actions. The satire of Le Sage is as quick and sudden as it is poignant; his jest never is blunted by anticipation; ere we are aware that the bow is drawn, the shaft is quivering in the very centre of the mark. To quote examples, would be to quote the work through almost every page; and, accordingly, no author has afforded a greater

stock of passages, which have been generally employed as apophthegms, or illustrations of human nature and actions; and no wonder, since the force of whole pages is often compressed in fewer words than another author would have employed sentences. To take the first example that comes: The fiends of Profligacy and Chicane contend for possession and direction of a young Parisian. Pilardoc would have made him a *commis*, Asmodeus a debauchee. To unite both their views, the infernal conclave made the youth a *monk*, and effected a reconciliation between their contending brethren. "We embraced," says Asmodeus, "and have been mortal enemies ever since." It is well observed by the late editor of Le Sage's works, that the traits of this kind, with which the *Diable Boiteux* abounds, entitle it, much more than the Italian scenes of Gherardi, to the title of the *Grenier a Sel*, conferred on the latter work by the sanction of Boileau. That great poet, nevertheless, is said to have been of a different opinion. He threatened to dismiss a valet whom he found in the act of reading the *Diable Boiteux*. Whether this proceeded from the peevishness of indisposition, under which Boileau laboured in 1707; whether he supposed the knowledge of human life, and all its chicanery, to be learned from Le Sage's satire, was no safe accomplishment for a domestic; or whether, finally, he had private or personal causes for condemning the work and the author, is not now known. But the anecdote forms one example, amongst the many, of the unjust estimation in which men of genius are too apt to hold their contemporaries.

Besides the power of wit and satire displayed in the *Diable Boiteux*, with so much brilliancy, there are passages in which the author assumes a more serious and moral tone ; he sometimes touches upon the pathetic, and sometimes even approaches the sublime. The personification of Death is of the latter character, until we come to the point where the author's humour breaks forth, and where, having described one of the terrific phantom's wings as painted with war, pestilence, famine, and shipwreck, he adorns the other with the representation of young physicians taking their degree.

To relieve the reader from the uniformity which might otherwise have attached to the hasty and brief sketches of what is only subjected to the eye, Le Sage has introduced several narratives in the Spanish taste, such as the History of the Count de Belflor, and the novel called the Force of Friendship. Cervantes had set the example of varying a .ong narrative, by the introduction of such novels, or *historiettes*. Scarron and others had followed the plan, but with less propriety than Le Sage, since it must be owned, that in a work of which the parts are so unconnected with each other, as in the *Diable Boiteux*, such relief is more appropriate than when the novel serves inartificially to interrupt the progress of a principal story.

The immediate popularity of the *Diable Boiteux* was increased at the time of publication, by the general belief that Le Sage, who lived so much in the world, and was so close an observer of what passed around him, had, under Spanish names, and with fictitious circumstances, recounted many Pari-

sian anecdotes, and drawn many characters of the court and city. Some of these were immediately recognised. The spendthrift Dufresny (supposed to be a descendant of Henry IV. by his grandmother, a female called La Belle Jardiniere d'Anet) was recognised as the old bachelor of rank, who married his laundress, to get rid of her claim. The story of the German baroness, who curled her hair with the promise of marriage made to her by an ardent but imprudent lover, relates to a similar anecdote of the celebrated Ninon de L'Enclos Baron, the celebrated actor, is the dramatic hero, who dreams that the gods had decreed him an apotheosis, by transforming him into a stage decoration. The celebrated Helvetius was generally supposed to be the original of the sage Sangrado; and doubtless other individuals of the faculty, which Le Sage, like Molière, persecuted with his raillery, were also known. The satire of both authors flowed, perhaps, more freely, that each of them enjoyed a state of good health, which enabled them to set the faculty at defiance, and also because the professional recompense of physicians, on the continent, was so mean as to degrade their character in society, and subject them to all the ridicule which, since the days of Juvenal, has attached to learning in rags.

Besides the personal allusions which we have noticed, there are doubtless many others in the novel, which might be easily understood at the time; and the rage for private scandal probably carried the spirit of applying passages in the work to existing persons and circumstances, much farther than the writer intended.

The popularity of the *Diable Boiteux* was unbounded at its first appearance, nor has it ever since been abated. The strongest proof of the ardour with which it was received, was, that two young men entering the same bookseller's shop, in which there chanced to be only one copy of the work, contested the possession of it by fighting upon the spot, and the victor having wounded his antagonist, carried off the volume as the prize of the field. Certainly this well-attested anecdote, to which the popularity of Asmodeus gave occasion, deserved to be recorded by the Demon himself. One Dancourt, also a dramatist, who supplied his deficiencies of genius and invention by his promptitude in seizing every topic of popular interest, brought the subject of the *Diable Boiteux* on the stage, in two parts; the first of which ran for thirty-five nights, the second for seventy-two.

It only remains to be said of this celebrated moral satire, that nineteen years after it had appeared in a single volume, the author published it with augmentations, which increased the work to two. This addition had the usual fate of continuations, and was not, at the time, considered as equal to the original publication; but it would now be difficult to perceive any difference between them. The Dialogues of the Chimneys of Madrid, which were for the first time appended to the *Diable Boiteux*, in the new edition just mentioned, were more justly censured as inferior to that celebrated work. The personification itself is a very awkward one, and forms a singular contrast to the unrivalled contrivance by which Don Cleofas acquires the know-

ledge of the interior of the dwellings of men, and even of the secrets of their bosoms.

The three first volumes of *Gil Blas de Santillane*, comprehending the life of that most excellent person, down to his first retreat to Lirias, raised the fame of Le Sage to the highest pitch, and secured it upon an immovable basis. Few have ever read this charming book without remembering, as one of the most delightful occupations of their life, the time which they first employed in the perusal; and there are few also who do not occasionally turn back to its pages with all the vivacity which attends the recollection of early love. It signifies nothing at what time we have first encountered the fascination; whether in boyhood, when we were chiefly captivated by the cavern of the robbers, and other scenes of romance; whether in more advanced youth, but while our ignorance of the world yet concealed from us the subtle and poignant satire which lurks in so many passages of the work; whether we were learned enough to apprehend the various allusions to history and public matters with which it abounds, or ignorant enough to rest contented with the more direct course of the narration. The power of the enchanter over us is alike absolute, under all these circumstances. If there is any thing like truth in Gray's opinion, that to lie upon a couch and read new novels was no bad idea of Paradise, how would that beatitude be enhanced, could human genius afford us another *Gil Blas!*

Le Sage's claim to originality, in this delightful work, has been idly, I had almost said ungrateful-

ly, contested by those critics, who conceive they detect a plagiarist wherever they see a resemblance in the general subject of a work, to one which has been before treated by an inferior artist. It is a favourite theme of laborious dulness, to trace out such coincidences; because they appear to reduce genius of the higher order to the usual standard of humanity, and, of course, to bring the author nearer a level with his critics. It is not the mere outline of a story—not even the adopting some details of a former author, which constitutes the literary crime of plagiarism. The proprietor of the pit from which Chantrey takes his clay, might as well pretend a right in the figure into which it is moulded under his plastic fingers; and the question is in both cases the same—not so much from whom the original rude substance came, as to whom it owes that which constitutes its real merit and excellence.

It is therefore no disparagement to Le Sage, that long before his time there existed in other countries, and particularly in Spain, that species of fiction to which *Gil Blas* may be in some respects said to belong. There arises in every country a species of low or comic romance, bearing somewhat the same proportion to the grave or heroic romance, which farce bears to tragedy. Readers of all countries are not more, if indeed they are equally delighted, with the perusal of high deeds of war and chivalry, achieved by some hero of popular name, than with the exploits of some determined freebooter, who follows his illicit trade by violence, or of some notorious sharper, who preys upon

society by address and stratagem. The lowness of such men's character, and the baseness of their pursuits, do not prevent their hazards, their successes, their failures, their escapes, and their subsequent fate, from being deeply interesting, not to the mere common people only, but to all who desire to read a chapter in the great book of human nature. We may use, though not in a moral sense, the oft-quoted phrase of Terence, and acknowledge ourselves interested in the tale, because *we* are *men* and the events are *human*.

In Spain, many of their most ingenious men took pleasure in making studies from low life, as their countryman, Murillo, found the favourite subjects of his pencil among the sun-burnt gipsies, shepherds, and muleteers. Thus the character of the *Picaro*, or Adventurer, had been long a favourite subject in Spanish fiction. *Lazarillo de Tormes* had been written by Juan de Luna; the History of *Paul the Sharper*, by the celebrated Quevedo. Even Cervantes had touched upon such a subject in the novel of *Riconete and Cortadillo*, in which there are some scenes of low life drawn with all the force of his powerful pen. But *Guzman d'Alfarache* was the most generally known of any of the class, and had been long since translated into most European languages. If *Gil Blas'* history had a prototype among these Spanish stories, it must have probably been in that of Guzman; and some slight resemblance may be discovered betwixt some of the incidents; for instance, the circumstances in which Guzman is about to marry the daughter of a wealthy Genoese, and that of the

excellent Don Raphael, in the house of Pedro de Moyadas. In like manner, the incident of that worthy assuming the dress of a dead hermit, is anticipated by Lazarillo de Tormes, in the second part of his History; and probably many other resemblances, or, if the reader pleases to call them so, plagiarisms, might be pointed out; for as the author furnished the plots of his dramatic pieces very often at the expense of the Spaniards, there is no probability that he would scruple to borrow from their romances whatever he found suitable to his own purpose.

There has been, indeed, an unauthenticated account of Le Sage having obtained possession of some manuscripts of Cervantes', which he had used liberally, and without acknowledgment, in the construction of his *Gil Blas.* A translation of Le Sage's novels into Spanish, bears also on the title-page the vaunt, that this operation has restored them to the language in which they were originally written. But the styles of Cervantes and Le Sage are so essentially different, though each in itself is masterly, that, in the absence of positive evidence, one would as soon be induced to believe that the Frenchman wrote *Don Quixote*, as that the Spaniard composed *Gil Blas.* If Le Sage borrowed any thing from Spain, excepting some general hints, such as we have noticed, it may have been some of the detached novels, which, as in the *Diable Boiteux*, are interwoven in the history, though with less felicity than in the earlier publication, where they do not interrupt the march of any principal

narrative. On the other hand, it is no doubt wonderful, that merely by dint of acquaintance with Spanish literature, Le Sage should have become so perfectly intimate, as he is admitted to be on all hands, with the Spanish customs, manners, and habits, as to conduct his reader through four volumes without once betraying the secret, that the work was not composed by a native of Spain. Indeed, it is chiefly on this wonderful observation of costume, and national manners, that the Spanish translator founds his reclamation of the work, as the original property of Spain. Le Sage's capacity of identifying himself with the child of his imagination, in circumstances in which he himself never was placed, though rare in the highest degree, is not altogether singular ; De Foe, in particular, possessed it in a most extraordinary degree. It may be added, that this strict and accurate attention to costume is confined to externals, so far as the principal personage is concerned. Gil Blas, though wearing the Golillo, Capa, and Spada, with the most pure Castilian grace, thinks and acts with all the vivacity of a Frenchman, and displays, in many respects, the peculiar sentiments of one.

The last French editor of Le Sage's works thinks that *Gil Blas* may have had a prototype in the humorous but licentious *History of Francion*, written by the Sieur Moulinet de Parc. I confess I cannot see any particular resemblance which *History of Gil Blas* has to that work, except that the scene of both lies chiefly in ordinary h as may be said of the *Roman Comique* of Scarron

The whole concoction of *Gil Blas* appears to me as original, in that which constitutes the essence of a composition, as it is inexpressibly delightful.

The principal character, in whose name and with whose commentaries the story is told, is a conception which has never been equalled in fictitious composition, yet which seems so very real, that we cannot divest ourselves of the opinion, that we listen to the narrative of one who has really gone through the scenes of which he speaks to us. Gil Blas' character has all the weaknesses and inequalities proper to human nature, and which we daily recognise in ourselves and in our acquaintance. He is not by nature such a witty sharper as the Spaniards painted in the characters of Paolo or Guzman, and such as Le Sage himself has embodied in the subordinate sketch of Scipio, but is naturally disposed towards honesty, though with a mind unfortunately too ductile to resist the temptations of opportunity or example. He is constitutionally timid, and yet occasionally capable of doing brave actions; shrewd and intelligent, but apt to be deceived by his own vanity; with wit enough to make us laugh with him at others, and follies enough to turn the jest frequently against himself. Generous, good-natured, and humane, he has virtues sufficient to make us love him, and as to respect, it is the last thing which he asks at his reader's hand. Gil Blas, in short, is the principal character in a moving scene, where, though he frequently plays a subordinate part in the action, all that he lays before us is coloured with his own opinions, remarks, and sensations. We feel the

individuality of Gil Blas alike in the cavern of the robbers, in the episcopal palace of the Archbishop of Grenada, in the bureau of the minister, and in all the other various scenes through which he conducts us so delightfully, and which are, generally speaking, very slightly connected together, or rather no otherwise related to each other, than as they are represented to have happened to the same man. In this point of view, the romance is one which rests on character rather than incident; but although there is no main action whatsoever, yet there is so much incident in the episodical narratives, that the work can never be said to linger or hang heavy.

The son of the squire of Asturias is intrusted also with the magic wand of the *Diable Boiteux*, and can strip the gilding from human actions with the causticity of Asmodeus himself.[1] Yet, with all this power of satire, the moralist has so much of gentleness and good-humour, that it may be said of Le Sage, as of Horace, *Circum præcordia ludit.* All is easy and good-humoured, gay, light, and lively; even the cavern of the robbers is illuminated with a ray of that wit with which Le Sage enlightens his whole narrative. It is a work which renders the reader pleased with himself and with mankind, where faults are placed before him in the light of follies rather than vices, and where misfortunes are so interwoven with the ludicrous, that

[1] ["We venture to be of opinion, that there is as much *useful knowledge* in Gil Blas, if the reader be one of those who would have understood the Epitaph of the Licentiate Pedro Garcias, as in any dozen volumes of real history the country of Le Sage has yet produced."—*Quarterly Review*, Sept. 1826.]

we laugh in the very act of sympathizing with them. All is rendered diverting—both the crimes and the retribution which follows them. Thus, for example, Gil Blas, during his prosperity, commits a gross act of filial undutifulness and ingratitude; yet we feel, that the intermediation of Master Muscada the grocer, irritating the pride of a *parvenu*, was so exactly calculated to produce the effect which it operated, that we continue to laugh with and at Gil Blas, even in the sole instance in which he shows depravity of heart. And then, the lapidation which he undergoes at Oviedo, with the disappointment in all his ambitious hopes of exciting the admiration of the inhabitants of his birthplace, is received as an expiation completely appropriate, and suited to the offence. In short, so strictly are the pages of *Gil Blas* confined to what is amusing, that they might perhaps have been improved by some touches of a more masculine, stronger, and firmer line of morality.

It ought not to escape notice, that Le Sage, though, like Cervantes, he considers the human figures which he paints as his principal object, fails not to relieve them by exquisite morsels of landscape, slightly touched indeed, but with the highest keeping, and the most marked effect. The description of the old hermit's place of retreat may be given as an example of what we mean.

In the *History of Gil Blas* is also exhibited that art of fixing the attention of the reader, and creating, as it were, a reality even in fiction itself, not only by a strict attention to costume and locality, but by a minuteness, and at the same time a viva-

city of narrative, comprehending many trifling circumstances which might be thought to have escaped every one's memory, excepting that of an actual eyewitness. By such a circumstantial detail, the author has rendered us as well acquainted with the four pavilions and *corps de logis* of Lirias, as if we had ourselves dined there with Gil Blas and his faithful follower Scipio. The well-preserved tapestry, as old as the Moorish kingdom of Valencia, the old-fashioned damask chairs—that furniture o. so little intrinsic value, which yet made, in its proper place, such a respectable appearance—the dinner, the siesta—all give that closing scene in the third volume such a degree of reality, and assure us so completely of the comfort and happiness of our pleasant companion, that the concluding chapters, in which the hero is dismissed, after his labours and dangers, to repose and happiness—these very chapters, which in other novels are glanced over as matter of course, are perhaps the most interesting in the *Adventures of Gil Blas* Not a doubt remains on the mind of the reader concerning the continuance of the hero's rural felicity, unless he should happen (like ourselves) to feel some private difficulty in believing that the new cook from Valencia could ever rival Master Joachim's excellence, particularly in the matter of the ollapodrida, and the pig's ears marinated. Indeed, to the honour of that author be it spoken, Le Sage, excellent in describing scenes of all kinds, gives such vivacity to those which interest the *gastronome* in particular, that an epicure of our acquaintance used to read certain favourite passages

regularly before dinner, with the purpose of getting an appetite like that of the Licentiate Sedillo, and so far as his friends could observe, the recipe was always successful.

At this happy point the *Adventures of Gil Blas* originally closed; but the excessive popularity of the work induced the author to add the fourth volume, in which Gil Blas is again brought from his retreat, and of new involved in the perils of a court life. Besides that the author in some degree repeats himself—for Gil Blas' situation under the Conde D'Olivarez is just the counterpart to that which he held under the Duke of Lerma—the Continuation has the usual fault of such works joins awkwardly with the original story, and is written evidently with less vigour and originality. Its reception from the public, according to a French critic, resembled the admiration given to a decaying beauty, whose features remain the same, though their freshness and brilliancy are abated by time.

Even after the death of Le Sage, it seemed as if his masterpiece was to give rise to as many Continuations as the *History of Amadis*. A spurious *History of Don Alphonzo Blas de Lirias, Son of Gil Blas of Santillane*, pretending to be a posthumous work of the original author, appeared at Amsterdam, and has been since reprinted.

In 1717, Le Sage published a translation, or rather a poor imitation, of Boiardo's *Orlando Inamorato*, which wild and imaginative poem he has degraded into a mere fairy tale, stripping it effectually of the magical colouring which it had received from the original writer. The author

intended to have committed the same violence upon Ariosto's splendid epic, but fortunately the consummation of the rash attempt did not take place. The ingenious and lively Frenchman was as completely devoid of the rich poetical fancy of the Tuscan poet, as the language in which he wrote was inadequate to express the beauties of the Italian original.

Le Sage found a more congenial employment in compiling the *Adventures of the Chevalier de Beauchene*, a brave sea-officer, or rather corsair—the Paul Jones of that period, in the West Indian seas. He professed to have derived the materials of this work, which was never completed, from the widow of the Chevalier, who resided at Tours. Le Sage has well supported the character of the frank, bold, half-civilized sailor, but apparently found the task troublesome, if we may judge from the numerous episodes which he has ingrafted on the principal story. Probably the work did not become popular, for though a Continuation was in some degree promised, it never appeared. The *Chevalier de Beauchene* came out in 1732, and in the same year Le Sage published a translation, or rather an abridgement, of the *Adventures of Guzman d'Alfarache*, the most celebrated of the Spanish romances *à la picaresque*.

In 1734, Le Sage translated the *History of Vanillo Gonzales, called the Merry Bachelor*, from the Spanish of Vincentio Espinella.

Apparently these subordinate labours had renewed the author's taste for original composition. The *Bachelor of Salamanca* was his last work of this description; and although we can easily

descry the flatness and insipidity which indicate the approach of age, and the decay of the finer powers of observation and expression, we are nevertheless ever and anon reminded of that genius which in its vigour produced *Gil Blas* and the *Diable Boiteux*. *The Bachelor of Salamanca* is, in comparison, a failure, but such as Le Sage alone could have committed; and many passages have all that raciness which distinguishes his happier productions. The scene, for example, in which Carambola is employed in reading to slumber the Member of the Council of the Indies, who unpitiably awakens at every instant when his reader stops to take a mouthful of refreshment, might have been told by Asmodeus himself. It must be owned that the scenes laid in Mexico have little merit of any kind. Le Sage had not the same accurate knowledge of the manners of New Spain, which he possessed respecting those of the mother country, and the account with which he presents us is in proportion flat and uninteresting. If it be true that Le Sage, jealous, like other old authors, of the earlier productions of his genius, preferred this work—the child of his old age, to his *Diable Boiteux* and *Gil Blas*, we can only say, that the same decay which is visible in his talents, must have also affected his taste, and that he certainly had not invoked the assistance of the acute Asmodeus when he formed his opinion.

After the *Bachelor of Salamanca*, Le Sage produced, in 1740, his last original work, *La Valise Trouvée*, which appeared anonymously in that year. His last labours thus approached the cha-

father could not for a long time hear of Montmenil's professional merit, or even of his private virtues, and the general respect in which he was held, without showing evident symptoms of great and painful emotion. At length a reconciliation was effected betwixt them, and, passing from displeasure to the most affectionate excess of parental fondness, it is said Le Sage could scarce bear to be separated from the son whose name he had hardly permitted to be mentioned before him. The death of Montmenil, which happened 8th September, 1743, in consequence of a cold caught at a hunting party, was such a blow to his father, then far advanced in life, that it determined his total retirement from Paris, and from the world.

The youngest son of our author also became a player, under the name of Pittenec; and it seems he was also a dramatic author, but made no distinguished figure in either capacity.

On the other hand Le Sage's second son showed a more staid character than either of his brothers, became a student of theology, and took orders. By the patronage of the Queen, (wife of Louis XV.) he became a canon of the Cathedral of Boulogne, and had the benefit of a pension. The moderate independence which he enjoyed, enabled him, after his father had been entirely broken down in spirits, by the death of Montmenil, to receive both him, his sister, and his mother, under his roof, and to provide for them during the residue of their lives. The sister was eminent for her filial tenderness, and dedicated her life to the comfort of her parents.

It was after his retreat to Boulogne, and while

in the Rue Saint Jacques, the guests formed a circle round him, nay, even mounted upon the seats and upon the tables, in order to catch the remarks and anecdotes which this celebrated observer of human nature could tell in society, with the same grace and effect with which he recorded them in his works.

Le Sage's circumstances, though very moderate, seem always to have been easy, and his domestic life was quiet and happy. Its tenor was somewhat interrupted by the taste which carried upon the stage his eldest and youngest sons. Nothing could be more natural than that the theatrical art should have invincible charms for the sons of a dramatic author; but Le Sage, who had expressed the greatest contempt and dislike of that profession, which he had painted in the most ridiculous and odious colours, felt great pain from his sons making choice of it, which probably was not lessened when the eldest obtained an honourable station among those very Romans of the Théâtre François, with whom his father had waged for so many years a satirical war. This eldest son of Le Sage was a youth of great hopes, and a most amiable disposition. He had been educated for the bar. Upon embracing the profession of a comedian, he assumed the name of Montmenil, under which he became distinguished for his excellence in the parts of valets, peasants, and other characters in low comedy. He was not less remarked for the worth of his private character, and his talents for society; and having early attained a situation in the Théâtre François, he mixed with the best company in Paris. Yet his

esiding under the roof of his son the canon, that ve obtain an interesting account of Le Sage, then xtremely aged, from the pen of the Comte de Tressan, to whom the ancient romances of France we the same favour which has been rendered to hose of England by the late ingenious and excelent George Ellis. The reader will feel interested n receiving the communication in the words of he Count himself.

"*Paris*, 20*th January*, 1783.

"You have requested from me some account of he concluding period of the celebrated author of *Gil Blas*. Here follow the few anecdotes which I am able to furnish.

"In the end of the year 1745, after the battle of Fontenoy, the late King having named me to serve ınder the Maréchal de Richelieu, I received counter orders at Boulogne, and remained there, commanlant of the Boulenois, Poitou, and Picardy.

"Having learned that Mons. Le Sage, aged ıpwards of eighty years, with his wife nearly as old, resided at Boulogne, I was early desirous of visiting them, and of acquainting myself with their situation. I found that they lived in family with their son, a canon of the Cathedral of Boulogne; and never was filial piety more tenderly occupied than his, in cheering and supporting the latter days of parents, who had scarce any other resource than the moderate revenue of their son.

"The Abbé Le Sage enjoyed the highest respect at Boulogne. His talents, his virtues, his social affections, rendered him dear to Monseigneur de

Pressy, his worthy bishop, to his fraternity, and to the public.

"I have seen few resemblances more striking than that of the Abbé Le Sage to his brother Mons. de Montmenil; he had even a portion of his talents, and of his most agreeable qualities. No one could read verses more agreeably. He possessed the uncommon art of that variation of tone, and of employing those brief pauses, which, without being actual declamation, impress on the hearers the sentiments and the beauties of the author.

"I had known, and I regretted, Mons. Montmenil. I entertained esteem and friendship for his brother; and the late Queen, in consequence of the account which I had to lay before her of the Abbé Le Sage's situation, and his narrow fortune, procured him a pension upon a benefice.

"I had been apprized not to go to visit Mons. Le Sage till near the approach of noon; and the feelings of that old man made me observe, for a second time, the effect which the state of the atmosphere produces in the melancholy days of bodily decline.

"Mons. Le Sage awaking every morning so soon as the sun appeared some degrees above the horizon, became animated, acquired feeling and force, in proportion as that planet approached the meridian; but as the sun began to decline, the sensibility of the old man, the light of his intellect, and the activity of his bodily organs, began to diminish in proportion; and no sooner had the sun descended some degrees under the horizon, than he sunk into a lethargy, from which it was difficult to rouse him

" I took care only to make my visit at that period of the day when his intellect was most clear, which was the hour after he had dined. I could not view without emotion the respectable old man, who preserved the gaiety and urbanity of his better years, and sometimes even displayed the imagination of the author of the *Diable Boiteux* and of *Turcaret*. But one day, having come more late than usual, I was sorry to see that his conversation began to resemble the last homilies of the Bishop of Grenada, and I instantly withdrew.

" Mons. Le Sage had become very deaf. I always found him seated near a table on which lay a large hearing-trumpet; that trumpet, which he sometimes snatched up with vivacity, remained unmoved on the table, when the nature of the visit which he received did not encourage him to hope for agreeable conversation. As I commanded in the province, I had the pleasure to see him always make use of it in conversation with me; and it was a lesson which prepared me to sustain the petulant activity of the hearing-trumpet of my dear and illustrious associate and friend Mons. de la Condamine.[1]

" Monsieur Le Sage died in winter 1746-7. I considered it as an honour and duty to attend his funeral, with the principal officers under my command. His widow survived him but a short time; and a few years afterwards, the loss of the Abbé

[1] Mons. de la Condamine, very deaf and very importunate, was the terror of the members of the Academie, from the vivacity with which he urged enquiries, which could only be satisfied by the inconvenient medium of his hearing-trumpet.

Le Sage became the subject of regret to his Chapter, and the enlightened society to which he was endeared by his virtues."

The interesting account of Monsieur de Tressan having conducted Le Sage to an honoured tomb, we have but to add, that an epitaph, placed over his grave, expressed, in indifferent poetry, the honourable truth, that he was the friend of Virtue rather than of Fortune.[1] Indeed when the giddy hours of youth were passed, his conduct seems to have been irreproachable; and if, in his works, he has assailed vice rather with ridicule than with reproach, and has, at the same time, conducted his story through scenes of pleasure and of license, his Muse has moved with an unpolluted step, even where the path was somewhat miry. In short, it is highly to the honour of Le Sage, that—differing in that particular from many of his countrymen who have moved in the same walk of letters,—he has never condescended to pander to vice by warmth or indelicacy of description. If Voltaire, as it is said, held the powers of Le Sage in low estimation, such slight regard was particularly misplaced towards one, who, without awakening one evil thought, was able, by his agreeable fictions, to excite more lasting and more honourable interest than the witty Lord of Ferney himself, even though Asmodeus sat at his elbow to aid him in composing *Candide* and *Zadig*.

[1] "Sous ce tombeau Le Sage abattu,
Par le ciseau de la Parque importune.
S'il ne fut pas ami de la Fortune,
Il fut toujours ami de la Vertu."

CHARLES JOHNSTONE.

Of the author of the *Adventures of a Guinea*, a satire which, from its resemblance to the *Diable Boiteux*, arranges naturally with those of the author of *Gil Blas*, we can say but little.

Charles Johnstone was an Irishman by birth, though it is said a Scotsman by descent, and of the Annandale family. If so, we have adopted the proper orthography, though his name seems to have sometimes been spelt Johnson. He received a classical education; and, being called to the Bar, came to England to practise. Johnstone, like Le Sage—and the coincidence is a singular one—was subject to the infirmity of deafness, an inconvenience which naturally interfered with his professional success;—although, by a rare union of high talents with eloquence and profound professional skill, joined to an almost intuitive acuteness of apprehension, we have, in our time, seen the disadvantage splendidly surmounted. But Johnstone possessed considerable abilities, of which he has left at least one admirable example, in the *Adventures of a Guinea*. His talents were of a lively and companionable sort, and as he was much abroad in the world, he had already, in his youth, kept such general society with men of all descriptions, as

enabled him to trace their vices and follies with a pencil so powerful.

Chrysal is said to have been composed at the late Lord Mount Edgecomb's, in Devonshire, during a visit to his lordship. About 1760, the work was announced in the newspapers as "a dispassionate distinct account of the most remarkable transactions of the present times all over Europe." The publication immediately followed, and, possessing at once the allurement of setting forth the personal and secret history of living characters, and that of strong expression and powerful painting, the public attention was instantly directed towards it. A second edition was called for almost immediately, to which the author made several additions, which are incorporated with the original text. But the public avidity being still unsatisfied, the third edition, in 1761, was augmented to four volumes.[1] The author, justly thinking that it was unnecessary to bestow much pains in dovetailing his additional matter upon the original narrative, and conscious that no one was interested in the regular transmission of *Chrysal* from one hand to another, has only connected the Original Work and the Continuation by references, which will not be found always either accurate or intelligible,—a point upon which he seems to have been indifferent.

[1] ["Dr Johnson told me," (1773,) says Boswell, "he did not know who was the author of the 'Adventures of a Guinea;' but that the bookseller had sent the first volume to him in manuscript, to have his opinion if it should be printed; and he thought it should."— CROKER's *Boswell*, vol. ii., p. 500.]

After this successful effort, Mr Johnstone published the following obscure and forgotten works:

"*The Reverie; or, a Flight to the Paradise of Fools.*" 2 vols. 12mo, 1762. A satire.

"*The History of Arsaces, Prince of Betlis.*" 2 vols. 12mo, 1774. A sort of political romance.

"*The Pilgrim; or, A Picture of Life.*" 2 vols. 12mo, 1775.

"*The History of John Juniper, Esq.* alias *Juniper Jack.*" 3 vols. 12mo, 1781. A romance in low life.

These publications we perused long since, but remember nothing of them so accurately as to induce us to hazard an opinion on their merits.

So late as 1782, twenty years after the appearance of *Chrysal*, Mr Johnstone went to seek fortune in India, and had the happy chance to find it there, though not without encountering calamity on the road. The Brilliant, Captain Mears, in which he embarked, was wrecked off the Joanna Islands, and many lives lost. Johnstone, with the captain and some others, was saved with difficulty.

In Bengal, Johnstone wrote much for the periodical papers, under the signature of Oneiropolos. He became joint-proprietor of one of the Bengal newspapers, acquired considerable property, and died about the year 1800; and, as is conjectured, in the seventieth year of his age. Most of these facts have been transferred from Mr Chalmers's *Biographical Dictionary.*

It is only as the author of what has been termed the Scandalous Chronicle of the time, that Johnstone's literary character attracts our notice. We

have already observed, that there is a close resemblance betwixt the plan of *Chrysal* and that of the *Diable Boiteux*. In both works, a Spirit, possessed of the power of reading the thoughts, and explaining the motives of mankind, is supposed to communicate to a mortal a real view of humanity, stripping men's actions of their borrowed pretexts and simulated motives, and tracing their source directly to their passions or their follies. But the French author is more fortunate than the English, in the medium of communication he has chosen, or rather borrowed, from Guevara. Asmodeus is himself a personage admirably imagined and uniformly sustained, and who entertains the reader as completely by the display of his own character, as by that of any which he anatomizes for the instruction of Don Cleofas. Malicious as he is, the reader conceives even a kind of liking for the Fiend, and is somewhat disconcerted with the idea of his returning to his cabalistic bottle; nay, could we judge of the infernal regions by this single specimen, we might be apt to conceive, with Sancho Panza, that there is some good company to be found even in hell. Chrysal, on the other hand, is a mere elementary spirit, without feeling, passion, or peculiar character, and who only reflects back, like a mirror, the objects which have been presented to him, without adding to or modifying them by any contribution of his own.

The tracing of a piece of coin into the hands of various possessors, and giving an account of the actions and character of each, is an ingenious medium for moral satire, which, however, had been

already employed by Dr Bathurst, the friend of Johnson, in the *Adventures of a Halfpenny*, which form the forty-third Number of the *Adventurer*, published 3d April, 1753, several years before *Chrysal.*

It is chiefly in the tone of the satire that the adventures of Chrysal differ from those of Le Sage's heroes. We have compared the latter au thor to Horace, and may now safely rate Charles Johnstone as a prose Juvenal. The Frenchman describes follies which excite our laughter—the Briton drags into light vices and crimes, which arouse our horror and detestation. And, as we before observed, that the scenes of Le Sage might, in a moral point of view, be improved by an infusion of more vigour and dignity of feeling, so Johnstone might have rendered his satire more poignant, without being less severe, by throwing more lights among his shades, and sparing us the grossness of some of the scenes which he reprobates. As Le Sage renders vice ludicrous, Johnstone seems to paint even folly as detestable, as well as ridiculous. His Herald and Auctioneer are among his lightest characters; but their determined roguery and greediness render them hateful even while they are comic.

It must be allowed to this caustic satirist, that the time in which he lived called for such an unsparing and uncompromising censor. A long course of national peace and prosperity had brought with these blessings their usual attendant evils—selfishness, avarice, and gross debauchery. We are not now, perhaps, more moral in our conduct than men

were fifty or sixty years since; but modern vice pays a tax to appearances, and is contented to wear a mask of decorum. A Lady H—— and the Pollard Ashe, so often mentioned in Horace Walpole's Correspondence, would not certainly dare to insult decency in the public manner then tolerated; nor would our wildest debauchees venture to imitate the orgies of Medenham Abbey, painted by Johnstone in such horrible colours. Neither is this the bound of our improvement. Our public men are now under the necessity of being actuated, or at least appearing to be so, by nobler motives than their predecessors proposed to themselves. Sir Robert Walpole, who, after having governed so many years by the most open and avowed corruption, amassed for himself a more than princely fortune out of the spoils of the state, would not now be tolerated. This age would not endure the splendours of Houghton. Our late ministers and statesmen have died, almost without an exception, beggared and bankrupt; a sure sign, that if they followed the dictates of ambition, they were at least free from those of avarice: and it is plain that the path of the former may often lie parallel with that prescribed by public virtue, while the latter must always seduce its votary into the by-way of private selfishness. The general corruption of the ministers themselves, and their undisguised fortunes, acquired by an avowed system of perquisites, carried, in our fathers' times, a corresponding spirit of greed and rapacity into every department, while, at the same time, it blinded the eyes of those who should have prevented spoliation. If those in subordinate offices

paid enormous fees to their superiors, it could only be in order to purchase the privilege for themselves of cheating the public with impunity. And in the same manner, if commissaries for the army and navy filled the purses of the commanders, they did so only that they might thereby obtain full license to exercise every sort of pillage, at the expense of the miserable privates. We were well acquainted with men of credit and character, who served in the Havannah expedition; and we have always heard them affirm, that the infamous and horrid scenes described in *Chrysal*, were not in the slightest degree exaggerated. That attention to the wants, that watchful guardianship of the rights and interests, of the private soldier and sailor, which in our days do honour to these services, were then totally unknown. The commanders in each department had in their eye the amassing of wealth, instead of the gathering of laurels, as the minister was determined to enrich himself, with indifference to the welfare of his country; and the elder Pitt, as well as Wolfe, were considered as characters almost above humanity, not so much for the eloquence and high talents of the one, or the military skill of the other, as because they made the honour and interest of their country their direct and principal object. They *dared*, to use the classical phrase, to contemn wealth—the statesman and soldier of the present day would, on the contrary, not *dare* to propose it to himself as an object.

The comparative improvement of our manners, as well as of our government, is owing certainly, in a great measure, to more general diffusion of

knowledge and improvement of taste. But it was fostered by the private virtues and patriotism of the late venerated Monarch. The check which his youthful frown already put upon vice and license, is noticed in *Chrysal* more than once; and the disgrace of more than one minister, in the earlier part of his reign, was traced pretty distinctly to their having augmented their private fortunes, by availing themselves of their political information to speculate in the funds. The abuses in public offices have, in like manner, been restrained, the system of perquisites abolished, and all means of indirect advantage interdicted, as far as possible, to the servants of the public. In the army and navy the same salutary regulations have been adopted; and the Commander-in-Chief has proved himself the best friend to his family and country, in cutting up by the roots those infectious cankers, which gnawed our military strength, and which are so deservedly stigmatized in the caustic pages of *Chrysal*.

In Johnstone's time this reform had not commenced, and he might well have said, with such an ardent temper as he seems to have possessed, *Difficile est satyram non scribere*. He has accordingly indulged his bent to the utmost; and as most of his characters were living persons, then easily recognised, he held the mirror to nature, even when it reflects such horrible features. His language is firm and energetic—his power of personifying character striking and forcible, and the persons of his narrative move, breathe, and speak, in all the freshness of life. His sentiments are, in general, those of the bold, high-minded, and indignant censor of

a loose and corrupted age; yet it cannot be denied, that Johnstone, in his hatred and contempt for the more degenerate vices, of ingratitude, avarice, and baseness of every kind, shows but too much disposition to favour Churchill and other libertines, who thought fit to practise open looseness of manners, because they said it was better than hypocrisy. It is true, such vices may subsist along with very noble and generous qualities; but as all profligacy has its root in self-gratification and indulgence, it is always odds that the weeds rise so fast as to choke the slower and nobler crop.

The same indulgence to the usual freedoms of a town life, seems to have influenced Johnstone's dislike to the Methodists, of whose founder, Whitefield, he has drawn a most odious and a most unjust portrait. It is not the province of the Editor of a book of professed amusement, to vindicate the tenets of a sect which holds almost all amusement to be criminal; but it is necessary to do justice to every one. The peculiar tenets of the Methodists are, in many respects, narrow and illiberal—they are also enthusiastical, and, acting on minds of a certain temperament, have produced the fatal extremities of spiritual presumption, or spiritual despair. But to judge as we would desire to be judged, we must try their doctrine, not by those points in which they differ, but by those in which they agree with all other Christians; and if we find that the Methodists recommend purity of life, strictness of morals, and a regular discharge of the duties of society, are they to be branded as hypocrites because they abstain from its amusements and its

gaieties? Were the number of the Methodists to be multiplied by a hundred, there would remain enough behind to fill the theatres and encourage the fine arts.

Respecting the remarkable person by whom the sect was founded, posterity has done him justice for the calumnies with which he was persecuted during his life, and which he bore with the enduring fortitude of a confessor. The poverty in which Whitefield died, proved his purity of heart, and refuted the charge so grossly urged, of his taking a selfish interest in the charitable subscriptions which his eloquence promoted so effectually. His enthusiasm—for Providence uses, in accomplishing great ends, the imperfections as well as the talents of his creatures—served to awaken, to a consciousness of their deplorable state, thousands, to whose apathy and ignorance a colder preacher might have spoken in vain; and perhaps even the Church of England herself has been less impaired by the schism, than benefited by the effects of emulation upon her learned clergy. In a word, if Cowper's portrait of Whitefield has some traits of flattery, it still approaches far more near to the original than the caricature of Johnstone:—

> "He loved the world that hated him—the tear
> That dropped upon the Bible was sincere.
> Assailed by scandal and the tongue of strife,
> His only answer was a blameless life;
> And he that forged, and he that threw the dart,
> Had each a brother's interest in his heart.
> Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed,
> Were followed well in him, and well transcribed."

We think these remarks necessary to justice, in

the Preface to a work, in which this memorable individual is so deeply charged. They can hardly be imputed to any other motive, since those likely to be gratified by this vindication cannot very consistently seek for it in this place. But readers of a different description may do well to remember, that the cant of imputing to hypocrisy all pretensions to a severer scale of morals, or a more vivid sense of religion, is as offensive to sound reason and Christian philosophy, as that which attaches a charge of guilt to matters of indifference, or to the ordinary amusements of life.

We would willingly hope that several of Johnstone's other characters, if less grossly calumniated than Whitefield, are at least considerably overcharged. The first Lord Holland was a thorough-bred statesman of that evil period, and the Earl of Sandwich an open libertine; yet they also had their lighter shades of character, although *Chrysal* holds them up to the unmitigated horror of posterity The same may be said of others; and this exaggeration was the more easy, as Johnstone does noc pretend that the crimes imputed to those person ages were all literally committed, but admits that he invented such incidents as he judged might best correspond to the idea which he had formed of their character; thus rather shaping his facts according to a preconceived opinion, than deducing his opinion from facts which had actually taken place.

The truth is, that young, ardent, and bold, the author seems to have caught fire from his own

subject, to have united credulity in belief with force of description, and to have pushed praise too readily into panegyric, while he exaggerated censure into reprobation. He everywhere shows himself strongly influenced by the current tone of popular feeling; nay, unless in the case of Wilkes, whose simulated patriotism he seems to have suspected, his acuteness of discrimination seldom enables him to correct public opinion. The Bill for the Naturalization of the Jews had just occasioned a general clamour, and we see Chrysal not only exposing their commercial character in the most odious colours, but reviving the ancient and absurd fable of their celebrating the Feast of the Passover by the immolation of Christian infants. With the same prejudiced credulity he swallows, without hesitation, all the wild and inconsistent charges which were then heaped upon the order of the Jesuits, and which occasioned the general clamour for their suppression.

On the other hand, because it was the fashion to represent the continental war, which had for its sole object the protection of the Electorate of Hanover, as waged in defence of the Protestant religion, Johnstone has dressed up the selfish and atheistical Frederick of Prussia in the character of *the Protestant hero*, and put into his mouth a prayer adapted to the character of a self-devoted Christian soldier, who drew his sword in the defence of that religion which was enshrined in his own bosom. This is so totally out of all keeping and character, that one can scarce help thinking that the author

has written, not his own sentiments, but such as were most likely to catch the public mind at the time.

But, feeling and writing under the popular impression of the moment, Johnstone has never failed to feel and write like a true Briton, with a sincere admiration of his country's laws, an ardent desire for her prosperity, and a sympathy with her interests, which more than atone for every error and prejudice. He testifies on many occasions his respect for the House of Brunswick, and leaves his testimony against the proceedings first commenced by Wilkes, and so closely followed by imitators of that unprincipled demagogue, for the purpose of courting the populace by slandering the throne. It is remarkable, that notwithstanding his zeal for King George and the Protestant religion, the Jacobite party, though their expiring intrigues might have furnished some piquant anecdotes, are scarcely mentioned in *Chrysal.*

A Key to the personages introduced to the reader in *Chrysal*, was furnished by the author himself to Lord Mount Edgecomb, and another to Captain Mears, with whom he sailed to India. It is published by Mr William Davis, in his collection of *Bibliographical and Literary Anecdotes*, with this caveat—" The author's intention was to draw general characters; therefore, in the application of the Key, the reader must exercise his own judgment."[1] The Key is subjoined to the text, with a few addi-

[1] [See Davis's Olio, pp., 13, 21.]

tional notes, illustrative of such incidents and characters as properly belong to history or to public life. Anecdotes of private scandal are willingly left in the mystery in which the text has involved them; and some instances occur, in which the obvious misrepresentations of the satirist have been modified by explanation. But when all exaggeration has been deducted from this singular work, enough of truth will still remain in *Chrysal*, to incline the reader to congratulate himself, that these scenes have passed more than half a century before his time.

ROBERT BAGE.

ROBERT BAGE, a writer of no ordinary merit in the department of fictitious composition, was one of that class of men occurring in Britain alone, who unite successfully the cultivation of letters with those mechanical pursuits, which, upon the continent, are considered as incompatible with the character of an author. The professors of letters are, in most nations, apt to form a *caste* of their own, into which they may admit men educated for the learned professions, on condition, generally speaking, that they surrender their pretensions to the lucrative practice of them; but from which mere burghers, occupied in ordinary commerce, are as severely excluded, as *roturiers* were of old from the society of the *noblesse*. The case of a paper-maker or a printer employing their own art upon their own publications, would be thought uncommon in France or Germany; yet such were the stations of Bage and Richardson.

The Editor has been obliged by Miss Catherine Hutton, daughter of Mr Hutton of Birmingham, well known as an ingenious and successful antiquary,[1] with a memoir of the few incidents mark-

[1] [William Hutton, F.S.A. Edin., bookseller, Birmingham, a native of Derby, who raised himself by industry, from a very small beginning, to a state of affluence and respectability, died

ing the life of Robert Bage, whom a kindred genius, as well as a close commercial intercourse, combined to unite in the bonds of strict friendship. The communication is extremely interesting, and the extracts from Bage's letters show, that amidst the bitterness of political prejudices, the embarrassment of commercial affairs, and all the teazing technicalities of business, the author of *Barham Downs* still maintained the good-humoured gaiety of his natural temper. One would almost think the author must have drawn from his own private letter-book and correspondence, the discriminating touches which mark the men of business in his novels.

The father of Robert Bage was a paper-maker at Darley, a hamlet on the river Derwent, adjoining the town of Derby, and was remarkable only for having had four wives. Robert was the son of the first, and was born at Darley on the 29th of February, 1728. His mother died soon after his birth; and his father, though he retained his mill, and continued to follow his occupation, removed to Derby, where his son received his education at a common school. His attainments here, however, were very remarkable, and such as excited the surprise and admiration of all who knew him. At seven years old, he had made a proficiency in Latin. To a knowledge of the Latin language

1815, aged 92. He employed his pen on a variety of subjects, antiquarian, statisticial, poetical, and historical.]

succeeded a knowledge of the art of making paper, which he acquired under the tuition of his father.

At the age of twenty-three, Robert Bage married a young woman, who possessed beauty, good sense, good temper, and money. It may be presumed that the first of these was the first forgotten; the two following secured his happiness in domestic life; the last aided him in the manufacture of paper, which he commenced at Elford, four miles from Tamworth, and conducted to the end of his days.

Though no man was more attentive to business, and no one in the country made paper so good of its kind, yet the direction of a manufactory, combined with his present literary attainments, did not satisfy the comprehensive mind of Robert Bage. His manufactory, under his eye, went on with the regularity of a machine, and left him leisure to indulge his desire of knowledge. He acquired the French language from books alone, without any instructor; and his familiarity with it is evinced by his frequent, perhaps too frequent, use of it in the *Fair Syrian.* Nine years after his marriage, he studied mathematics; and, as he makes one of his characters say, and as he probably thought respecting himself, " He was obliged to this science for a correct imagination, and a taste for uniformity in the common actions of life."

In the year 1765, Bage entered into partnership with three persons, (one of them the celebrated Dr Darwin,) in an extensive manufactory of iron; and, at the end of fourteen years, when the partnership terminated, he found himself a loser, it is

believed, of fifteen hundred pounds. The reason and philosophy of the paper-maker might have struggled long against so considerable a loss; the man of letters committed his cause to a better champion—literary occupation,—the tried solace of misfortune, want, and imprisonment. He wrote the novel of *Mount Henneth*, in two volumes, which was sold to Lowndes for thirty pounds, and published in 1781. The strong mind, playful fancy, liberal sentiments, and extensive knowledge of the author, are everywhere apparent; but, as he says himself, "too great praise is a bad letter of recommendation;" and truth, which he worshipped, demands the acknowledgment, that its sins against decorum are manifest.

The succeeding works of Bage were, *Barham Downs*, two volumes, published 1784; *The Fair Syrian*, two volumes, published (about) 1787; *James Wallace*, three volumes, published 1788; *Man as he is*, four volumes, published 1792; *Hermsprong, or Man as he is not*, three volumes, published 1796. It is, perhaps, without a parallel in the annals of literature, that, of six different works, comprising a period of fifteen years, the last should be, as it unquestionably is, the best. Several of Bage's novels were translated into German, and published at Frankfort.

Whoever has read Hayley's *Life of Cowper* will not be sorry that an author should speak for himself, instead of his biographer speaking for him; on this principle are given some extracts from the letters of Robert Bage to his friend, William Hutton. Hutton purchased nearly all the paper which

Bage made during forty-five years; and, though Bage's letters were letters of business, they were written in a manner peculiarly his own, and friendship was, more or less, interwoven in them; for trade did not, in him, extinguish, or contract, one finer feeling of the soul. Bage, in his ostensible character of a paper-maker, says,—

"*March* 28, 1785.

"I swear to thee I am one of the most cautious men in the world with regard to the excise; I constantly interpret against myself in doubtful points; and, if I knew a place where I was vulnerable, I would arm it with the armour of Achilles. I have already armed myself all over with the armour of righteousness, but that signifies nothing with our people of excise."

"*August* 15, 1787.

"Oh how I wish thou wouldst bend all thy powers to write a history of excise—with cases—showing the injustice, the inequality of clauses in acts, and the eternal direction every new one takes towards the oppression of the subject: It might be the most useful book extant. Of whites and blues, blue demy only can come into thy magazine, and that at a great risk of contention with the Lords of the Exchequer; for I know not whether I have understood the sense of people who have seldom the good luck to understand themselves. The paper sent is charged at the lowest price at which a sober paper-maker can live, and drink small-beer."

"*December* 10, 1788.

"Authors, especially when they have acquired a certain degree of reputation, should be candid, and addicted to speak good as well as evil, of poor dumb things. The rope paper is too thin, I own; but why abuse it from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot? If I have eyes, it has many good qualities, and I hope the good people of Birmingham may find them out. But it is too thin—I am heartily and sincerely concerned for it: But, as I cannot make it thicker, all I can do is to reduce the price. Thou proposest threepence a-ream—I agree to it. If thou really believest sixpence ought to be abated, do it. Combine together the

qualities of justice and mercy, and to their united influence I leave thee."

"*February* 23, 1789.

"The certainty that it cannot be afforded at the stipulated price, makes me run my rope paper too thin. Of this fault, however, I must mend, and will mend, whether thou can'st, or can'st not mend my price. I had rather lose some profit than sink a tolerable name into a bad one."

"*March* 11, 1793.

"I make no bill-of-parcels. I do not see why I should give myself the trouble to make thee bills-of-parcels, as thou can'st make them thyself; and, more especially, when it is probable thou wilt make them more to my liking than the issues of my own pen. If the paper is below the standard so far as to oblige thee to lower the price, I am willing to assist in bearing the loss. If the quantity over-burthens thee, take off a shilling a-bundle—or take off two; for thy disposition towards me—I see it with pleasure—is kindly."

"*June* 30, 1795.

"Every thing looks black and malignant upon me. Men clamouring for wages which I cannot give—women threatening to pull down my mill—rags raised by freight and insurance—excise-officers depriving me of paper! Say, if thou can'st, whether these gentlemen of the excise-office can seize paper after it has left the maker's possession?—after it has been marked?—stamped?—signed with the officer's name?—excise duty paid?—Do they these things?—Am I to hang myself?"

"*June* 6, 1799.

"Thou can'st not think how teazing the excise-officers are about colour. They had nearly seized a quantity of common cap paper, because it was whitened by the frost. They have an antipathy to any thing whiter than sackcloth."

Bage actually had paper seized by the excise-officers, and the same paper liberated, seized again, and again liberated. If his wisdom and integrity have been manifested in the foregoing extracts, the

ignorance and folly of these men, or of their masters, must be obvious.

A few extracts, not so immediately connected with conduct in trade, may not be superfluous.

"I swear by Juno, dear William, that one man cannot be more desirous of dealing with another than I am with thee. The chain that connects us cannot be snapped asunder without giving me pain almost to torture. Thou art not so sure of having found the place where Henry the Seventh was lost, as thou mightst have been of finding Elford and a friend.

"I received thy pamphlet,[1] and am not sure whether I have not read it with more pleasure than any of thy former works. It is lively, and the reasoning just. Only remember, it is sometimes against the institutions of juries and county courts that thou hast directed thy satire, which, I think, ought to be confined to the abuses of them. But why abusest thou me? Did'st thou not know of *Mount Henneth*, and *Barham Downs*, before publication? Yea, thou did'st. I think thou did'st also of the *Fair Syrian*. Of what, then, dost thou accuse me? Be just. And why dost thou call me an infidel? Do I not believe in every thing thou sayest? And am I not impatient for thy Derby? I am such a scoundrel as to grumble at paying 30 per cent *ad valorem*, which I really do, and more, on my boards, as if one could do too much for one's king and country. But I shall be rewarded when thy *History of Derby* comes forth."

"Miss Hutton was the harbinger of peace and good-will from the Reviewers. I knew she had taste and judgment; I knew also that her encomium would go beyond the just and proper bounds; but I also believed she would not condescend to flatter without some foundation."

"Eat my breakfast quietly, thou varlet! So I do when my house does not smoke, or my wife scold, or the newspapers do not tickle me into an irritation, or my men clamour for another increase of wages. But I must get my bread by eating as little of it as possible; for my Lord Pitt will want all I can screw of overplus. No matter. Ten years[2] hence, perhaps, I shall not care a farthing."

[1] Dissertation on Juries.

[2] Bage lived eight months after the date of this letter, which was written January 24, 1801.

"Another meeting among my men! Another (the third) raising of wages! What will all this end in? William Pitt seems playing off another of his alarming manœuvres—Invasion—against the meeting of Parliament, to scare us into a quiet parting with our money."

"If thou hast been again into Wales, and hast not expired in ecstasy, I hope to hear from thee soon. In the interim, and always and evermore, I am thine."

"I am afraid thy straggling mode of sending me any body's bills, and every body's bills, will subject me often to returned ones. But I have received good at thy hands, and shall I not receive evil? Every thing in this finest, freest, best of all possible countries, grows worse and worse, and why not thou?

"I looked for the anger thou talked'st of in thy last, but could not find it; and for what wouldst thou have been angry, if thou couldst? Turn thy wrath from me, and direct it against the winds and the fogs. In future, I fear it will be directed against the collectors of dirty rags in London and in Germany, where the prices 'have increased, are increasing, and ought to be diminished'—but will not be so, because we begin the century by not doing what we ought to do. What we shall do at the end of it I neither know nor care."

In October, 1800, Bage had visited Hutton at Birmingham, where the latter still passed the hours of business, and had taken Bennett's Hill in his way home, to call on Catherine Hutton, the daughter of his friend. Both were alarmed at the alteration in Bage's countenance, which exhibited evident symptoms of declining health. They believed that they should see him no more; and he was probably impressed with the same idea, for, on quitting the house at Birmingham, he cordially shook hands with Samuel Hutton, the grand-nephew of his friend, and said, "Farewell, my dear lad, we shall meet again in heaven."

At home, Bage seems to have indulged the hope of another meeting in the present world; for two

months after his letter of January, he says, in a letter to Hutton, " Tell Miss Hutton that I have thought of her some hundred times since I saw her; insomuch that I feared I was falling in love. I do love her as much as a man seventy-three years of age, and married, ought to love. I like the idea of paying her a visit, and will try to make it reality some time—but not yet." In April he was scarcely able to write a letter. In June he was again capable of attending to business; but in reply to his friend, who had mentioned paying him a visit, he said, " I should have been glad and sorry, dear William, to have seen thee at Tamworth." On the 1st of September, 1801, he died.

Bage had quitted Elford, and during the last eight years of his life he resided at Tamworth, where he ended his days. His wife survived him, but is since dead. He had three sons, one of whom died as he was approaching manhood, to the severe affliction of his father. Charles, the eldest son, settled at Shrewsbury, where he was the proprietor of a very extensive cotton manufactory. He died in 1822, at the age of seventy. Edward, the younger son, was apprenticed to a surgeon and apothecary at Tamworth, where he afterwards followed his profession. He died many years before his brother. Both possessed a large portion of their father's talents, and equalled him in integrity and moral conduct.

In his person, Robert Bage was somewhat under the middle size, and rather slender, but well proportioned. His complexion was fair and ruddy; his hair light and curling; his countenance intelli-

gent, mild, and placid. His manners were courteous, and his mind was firm. His integrity, his honour, his devotion to truth, were undeviating and incorruptible; his humanity, benevolence, and generosity, were not less conspicuous in private life, than they were in the principal characters in his works. He supplied persons he never saw with money, because he heard they were in want. He kept his servants and his horses to old age, and both men and quadrupeds were attached to him. He behaved to his sons with the unremitting affection of a father; but as they grew up, he treated them as men and equals, and allowed them that independence of mind and conduct which he claimed for himself.

On the subject of servants, Bage says, in *The Fair Syrian*, "I pity those unhappy masters, who, with unrelenting gravity, damp the effusions of a friendly heart, lest something too familiar for their lordly pride should issue from a servant's lip." Of a parent, he says, in the same work, "Instead of the iron rod of parents, he used only the authority of mild persuasion, and cultivated the affections of his children by social intercourse, and unremitting tenderness." It matters not into what mouth Robert Bage put these sentiments; they were his own, his practice was conformable to them, and their good effects were visible on all around him.

The following comparison between Robert Bage and his friend William Hutton, was written by Charles Bage, son of the former, in a letter to Catherine Hutton, daughter of the latter, October 6, 1816.

"The contrast between your father's life and mine is curious. Both were distinguished by great natural talents; both were mild, benevolent, and affectionate, qualities which were impressed on their countenances; both were indignant at the wantonness of pride and power; both were industrious, and both had a strong attachment to literature: yet, with these resemblances, their success in life was very different; my father never had a strong passion for wealth, and he never rose into opulence. Your father's talents were continually excited by contact with 'the busy haunts of men;' my father's were repressed by a long residence in an unfrequented place, in which he shunned the little society he might have had, because he could not relish the conversation of those whose minds were less cultivated than his own. In time, such was the effect of habit, that, although when young he was lively and fond of company, he enjoyed nothing but his book and pen, and a pool at quadrille with ladies. He seems, almost always, to have been fonder of the company of ladies than of men."

After this satisfactory account of Bage's life and character, there remains nothing for the Editor but to offer a few critical remarks upon his compositions.

The general object of Robert Bage's compositions, is rather to exhibit character, than to compose a narrative; rather to extend and infuse his own political and philosophical opinions, in which a man of his character was no doubt sincere, than merely to amuse the reader with the wonders, or melt him with the sorrows, of a fictitious tale. In this respect he resembled Voltaire and Diderot, who made their most formidable assaults on the system of religion and politics which they assailed, by embodying their objections in popular narratives. Even the quaint, facetious, ironical style of

this author seems to be copied from the lesser political Romances of the French school; and if Bage falls short of his prototypes in wit, he must be allowed to exhibit, upon several occasions, a rich and truly English vein of humour, which even Voltaire does not possess.

Respecting the tendency and motive of these works, it is not the Editor's purpose to say much. Bage appears, from his peculiar style, to have been educated a Quaker; at least—for we may be wrong in the above inference—he has always painted the individuals of that primitive sect of Christians in amiable colours, when they are introduced as personages into his novels. If this was the case, however, he appears to have wandered from the tenets of the Friends into the wastes of scepticism; and a sectary, who had reasoned himself into an infidel, could be friend neither to the Church of England, nor the doctrines which she teaches. His opinions of state affairs were perhaps a little biassed by the frequent visits of the excisemen, who levied taxes on his commodities, for the purpose of maintaining a war which he disapproved of. It was most natural that a person who considered tax-gatherers as extortioners, and the soldiers, paid by the taxes, as licensed murderers, should conceive the whole existing state of human affairs to be wrong; and if he was conscious of talent, and the power of composition, he might, at the same time, naturally fancy that he was called upon to put it to rights. No opinion was so prevalent in France, and none passed more current among the admirers of French philosophy in Britain, as that the power of framing

governments, and of administering them, ought to remain with persons of literary attainments; or, in other words, that those who can most easily and readily write books, are therefore best qualified to govern states. Whoever peruses the writings of the late ingenious Madame de Staël, will perceive that she (one of the most remarkable women certainly of her time) lived and died in the belief, that revolutions were to be effected, and countries governed, by a proper succession of clever pamphlets. A nation which has long enjoyed the benefit of a free press, does not furnish so many believers in the omnipotence of literary talent. Men are aware that every case may be argued on both sides, and seldom render their assent to any proposition merely on account of the skill with which it is advocated, or the art and humour with which it is illustrated. The Editor of this work was never one of those who think that a good cause can suffer much by free discussion; and though differing entirely both from his political and theological tenets, admitted Mr Bage's novels into the collection which he superintended, as works of talent and genius.

The satirical novel is a species of composition more adapted to confirm those who hold similar opinions with the author, by affording them a triumph at the expense of their opponents, than to convince those who, their minds being yet undecided, may be disposed calmly to investigate the subject. They who are inclined to burn an obnoxious or unpopular person in effigy, care little how far his dress and external appearance are exaggerated: and, in the same way, it requires little address in

an author, to draw broad caricatures of those whom he regards as foes, or to make specious and flattering representations of such as he considers as friends. They who look on the world with an impartial eye, will scarcely be of opinion, that Mr Bage has seized the true features which distinguish either the upper or lower ranks. The highest and the lowest rank in society, are each indeed liable to temptations peculiarly their own, and their relative situation serves to illustrate the wisdom of the prayer, " Give me neither poverty nor riches." But these peculiar propensities, we think, will in life be found considerably different from the attributes ascribed to the higher and lower classes by Mr Bage. In most cases, the author's great man resembles the giant of the ancient romance of chivalry, whose evil qualities were presumed from his superior stature, and who was to be tilted at and cut to pieces, merely because he stood a few inches higher than his fellow-mortals. But the very vices and foibles of the higher classes in modern times are of a kind different from what Bage has frequently represented them. Men of rank, in the present day, are too indifferent, and too indolent, to indulge any of the stormy passions, and irregular but vehement desires, which create the petty tyrant, and perhaps formerly animated the feudal oppressor. Their general fault is a want of energy, or, to speak more accurately, an apathy, which is scarcely disturbed even by the feverish risks to which they expose their fortune, for the sole purpose, so far as can be discerned, of enjoying some momentary excitation. Amongst the numbers, both

of rank and talent, who lie stranded upon the shores of Spenser's Lake of Idleness, are many who only want sufficient motives for exertion, to attract at once esteem and admiration; and among those, whom we rather despise than pity, a selfish apathy is the predominating attribute.

In like manner, the habits of the lower classes, as existing in Britain, are far from affording, exclusively, that rich fruit of virtue and generosity, which Mr Bage's writings would teach us to expect. On the contrary, they are discontented, not unnaturally, with the hardships of their situation, occupied too often in seizing upon the transient enjoyments which chance throws in their way, and open to temptations which promise to mend their condition in life, or at least to extend the circle of their pleasures at the expense of their morals.

Those, therefore, who weigh equally, will be disposed to think that the state of society most favourable to virtue, may be most successfully sought amongst those who neither want nor abound, who are neither sufficiently raised above the necessity of labour and industry, to be satiated by the ready gratification of every wild wish as it arises, nor so much depressed below the general scale of society, as to be exasperated by struggles against indigence, or seduced by the violence of temptations which that indigence renders it difficult to resist.

Though we have thus endeavoured to draw a broad line of distinction between the vices proper to the conditions of the rich and the poor, the reader must be cautious to understand these words in a

relative sense. For men are not rich or poor in relation to the general amount of their means, but in proportion to their wants and their wishes. He who can adjust his expenses within the limits of his income, how small soever that may be, must escape from the temptations which most easily beset indigence; and the rich man, who makes it his business, as it is his duty, to attend to the proper distribution of his wealth, will be equally emancipated from those to which opulence is peculiarly obnoxious.[1]

This misrepresentation of the different classes in society, is not the only speculative error in which Bage has indulged during these poetic narratives. There is in his novels a dangerous tendency to

1 [" Our author, as we have already seen, betrays the dictates of his better reason in the midst of his apology for Tom Jones; but what importance he really attaches to the influence so undervalued in the passage we have quoted, (See *ante*, p. 107-8, and note, p. 108-10,) is distinctly proved and abundantly illustrated in his preface to the works of a very inferior novelist, Robert Bage. The writer whose works have thus been recalled from an oblivion which we cannot help thinking they merited, wrote at the period of the French Revolution; and though he had been born and bred among the primitive and virtuous sect of our Quakers, he systematically made his novels the vehicle of all the anti-social, anti-moral, and anti-religious theories that were then but too much in vogue among the half-educated classes in this country. Sir Walter, after exposing with just ridicule the style of gross and senseless caricature in which Mr Bage, the son of a miller, and himself a paper-maker in a little country town, has thought fit to paint the manners of English gentlemen and ladies, proceeds, as follows, to notice the far graver offences of which his pen had been guilty:—' This misrepresentation of the different classes in society, &c.' "—*Quarterly Review*, Sept. 1826.]

slacken the reins of discipline upon a point, where, perhaps, of all others, society must be benefited by their curbing restraint.

Fielding, Smollett, and other novelists, have, with very indifferent taste, brought forward their heroes as rakes and debauchees, and treated with great lightness those breaches of morals, which are too commonly considered as venial in the male sex; but Bage has extended, in some instances, that license to the female sex, and seems at times even to sport with the ties of marriage, which is at once the institution of civil society most favourable to religion and good order, and that which, in its consequences, forms the most marked distinction between man and the lower animals. All the influence which women enjoy in society,—their right to the exercise of that maternal care which forms the first and most indelible species of education; the wholesome and mitigating restraint which they possess over the passions of mankind; their power of protecting us when young, and cheering us when old,—depend so entirely upon their personal purity, and the charm which it casts around them, that to insinuate a doubt of its real value, is wilfully to remove the broadest corner-stone on which civil society rests, with all its benefits, and with all its comforts. It is true, we can easily conceive that a female like Miss Ross, in *Barham Downs*, may fall under the arts of a seducer, under circumstances so peculiar as to excite great compassion; nor are we so rigid as to say, that such a person may not be restored to society, when her subsequent conduct shall have effaced recollection of her error.

But she must return thither as a humble penitent, and has no title to sue out her pardon as a matter of right, and assume a place among the virtuous of her sex as if she had never fallen from her proper sphere. Her disgrace must not be considered as a trivial stain, which may be communicated by a husband as an exceeding good jest to his friend and correspondent; there must be, not penitence and reformation alone, but humiliation and abasement, in the recollection of her errors. This the laws of society demand even from the unfortunate; and to compromise farther, would open a door to the most unbounded licentiousness. With this fault in principle is connected an indelicacy of expression frequently occurring in Bage's novels, but which, though a gross error in point of taste, we consider as a matter of much less consequence than the former It is in some degree chastened in the present edition, and where it exists must find such shelter as it can, under the faulty example of earlier novelists.

Having adverted to this prominent error in Mr Bage's theory of morals, we are compelled to remark, that his ideas respecting the male sex are not less inaccurate, considered as rules of mental government, than the over-indulgence with which he seems to regard female frailty. Hermsprong, whom he produces as the ideal perfection of humanity, is paraded as a man who, freed from all the nurse and all the priest has taught, steps forward on his path, without any religious or political restraint, as one who derives his own rules of conduct from his own breast, and avoids or resists all temptations of evil passions, because his reason teaches

him that they are attended with evil consequences. In the expressive words of our moral poet, Words worth, he is

> " A reasoning self-sufficient thing,
> An intellectual all-in-all."

But did such a man ever exist? or are we, in the fair construction of humanity, with all its temptations, its passions, and its frailties, entitled to expect such perfection from the mere force of practical philosophy? Let each reader ask his own bosom, whether it were possible for him to hold an unaltered tenor of moral and virtuous conduct, did he suppose that to himself alone he was responsible, and that his own reason, a judge so peculiarly subject to be bribed, blinded, and imposed upon by the sophistry with which the human mind can gloss over those actions to which human passions so strongly impel us, was the ultimate judge of his actions? Let each reader ask the question at his own conscience, and if he can honestly and conscientiously answer in the affirmative, he is either that faultless monster which the world never saw, or he deceives himself as grossly as the poor devotee, who, referring his course of conduct to the action of some supposed internal inspiration, conceives himself, upon a different ground, incapable of crime, even when he is in the very act of committing it.

We are not treating this subject theologically; the nature of our present work excludes such serious reasoning. But we would remind, even in these slight sketches, those who stand up for the self-sufficient morality of modern philosophy, or

rather sophistry, that the experiment has long since been tried on a large scale. Whatever may be the inferiority of the ancients in physical science, it will scarce be denied, that in moral science they possess all the lights which the unassisted Reason, now referred to as the sufficient light of our paths, could possibly attain. Yet, when we survey what their system of Ethics did for the perfection of the human species, we shall see that but a very few even of the teachers themselves have left behind them such characters as tend to do honour to their doctrines. Some philosophers there were, who, as instructors in morality, showed a laudable example to their followers; and we will not invidiously enquire how far these were supported in their self-denial, either by vanity, or the desire of preserving consistency, or the importance annexed to the founder of a sect; although the least of these motives afford great support to temperance, even in cases where it is not rendered easy by advanced age, which of itself calms the more stormy passions. But the satires of Juvenal, of Petronius, and, above all, Lucian, show what slight effect the doctrines of Zeno, Epictetus, Plato, Socrates, and Epicurus, produced on their avowed followers; and how little influence the beard of the Stoic, the sophistry of the Academician, and the self-denied mortification of the Cynics, had upon the sects which derived their names from these distinguished philosophers. We shall find that these pretended despisers of sensual pleasures shared the worst vices of the grossest age of society, and added to them the detestable hypocrisy of pretending, that they were

all the while guided by the laws of true wisdom and of right reason.

If, in modern times, they who own the restraint of philosophical discipline alone have not given way to such grossness of conduct, it is because those principles of religion, which they affect to despise, have impressed on the public mind a system of moral feeling, unknown till the general prevalence of the Christian faith; but which, since its predominance, has so generally pervaded European society, that no pretender to innovation can directly disavow its influence, though he endeavours to show that the same results which are recommended from the Christian pulpit, and practised by the Christian community, might be reached by the unassisted efforts of that human reason, to which he counsels us to resign the sole regulation of our morals.

In short, to oppose one authority in the same department to another, the reader is requested to compare the character of the philosophic Square in Tom Jones, with that of Bage's philosophical heroes; and to consider seriously whether a system of Ethics, founding an exclusive and paramount court in a man's own bosom for the regulation or his own conduct, is likely to form a noble, enlightened, and generous character, influencing others by superior energy and faultless example; or whether it is not more likely, as in the observer of the rule of right, to regulate morals according to temptation and to convenience, and to form a selfish, sophistical hypocrite, who, with morality always in his mouth, finds a perpetual apology for evading the practice

of abstinence, when either passion or interest solicit him to indulgence.

We do not mean to say, that, because Bage entertained erroneous notions, he therefore acted viciously. The history of his life, so far as known to us, indicates a contrary course of conduct. It would seem, from his language, as we have already said, that he had been bred among the strict and benevolent sect of Friends; and if their doctrines carried him some length in speculative error, he certainly could derive nothing from them to favour laxity of morals. In his fictitious works, the Quakers are always brought forward in an amiable point of view; and the characters of Arnold, and particularly of Miss Carlile, are admirable pictures of the union of talent, and even wit, with the peculiar manners and sentiments of these interesting and primitive persons. But if not vicious himself, Bage's leading principles are such as, if acted upon, would introduce vice into society; in men of a fiercer mould, they would lead to a very different line of conduct from his own; and, such being the case, it was the Editor's duty to point out the sophistry on which they are founded.

The works of Bage, abstracted from the views against which we have endeavoured to caution the reader, are of high and decided merit. It is scarce possible to read him without being amused, and, to a certain degree, instructed. His whole efforts are turned to the developement of human character; and, it must be owned, he possessed a ready key to it The mere story of the novels seldom possesses much interest—it is the conduct of his personages,

as thinking and speaking beings, in which we are interested; and, contrary to the general case, the reader is seldom or never tempted to pass over the dialogue in order to continue the narrative. The author deals occasionally in quick and improbable conversions, as in that of Sir George Osmond, from selfishness and avarice, to generosity and liberality, by the mere loveliness of virtue in his brother and his friends. And he does not appear to have possessed much knowledge of that species of character which is formed by profession or by nationality. His seamen are indifferent; his Irishmen not beyond those usually brought on the stage; his Scotchmen still more awkward caricatures, and the language which he puts in their mouths, not similar to any that has been spoken since the days of Babel. It is in detecting the internal workings of a powerful understanding, like that of Paracelsus Holman, that Bage's power chiefly consists; and great that power must be, considering how much more difficult it is to trace those varieties of character which are formed by such working, than merely to point out such as the mind receives from the manners and customs of the country in which it has ripened.

A light, gay, pleasing air, carries us agreeably through Bage's novels; and when we are disposed to be angry at seeing the worse made to appear the better reason, we are reconciled to the author by the ease and good-humour of his style. We did not think it proper to reject the works of so eminent an author from this collection, merely on account of speculative errors. We have done our

best to place a mark on these; and, as we are far from being of opinion, that the youngest and most thoughtless derive their serious opinions from productions of this nature, we leave them for our reader's amusement, trusting that he will remember that a good jest is no argument; that a novelist, like the master of a puppet-show, has his drama under his absolute authority, and shapes the events to favour his own opinions; and that whether the Devil flies away with Punch, or Punch strangles the Devil, forms no real argnment as to the comparative power of either one or other, but only indicates the special pleasure of the master of the motion.

END OF VOLUME THIRD.

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